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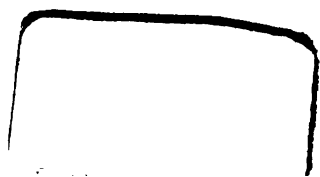
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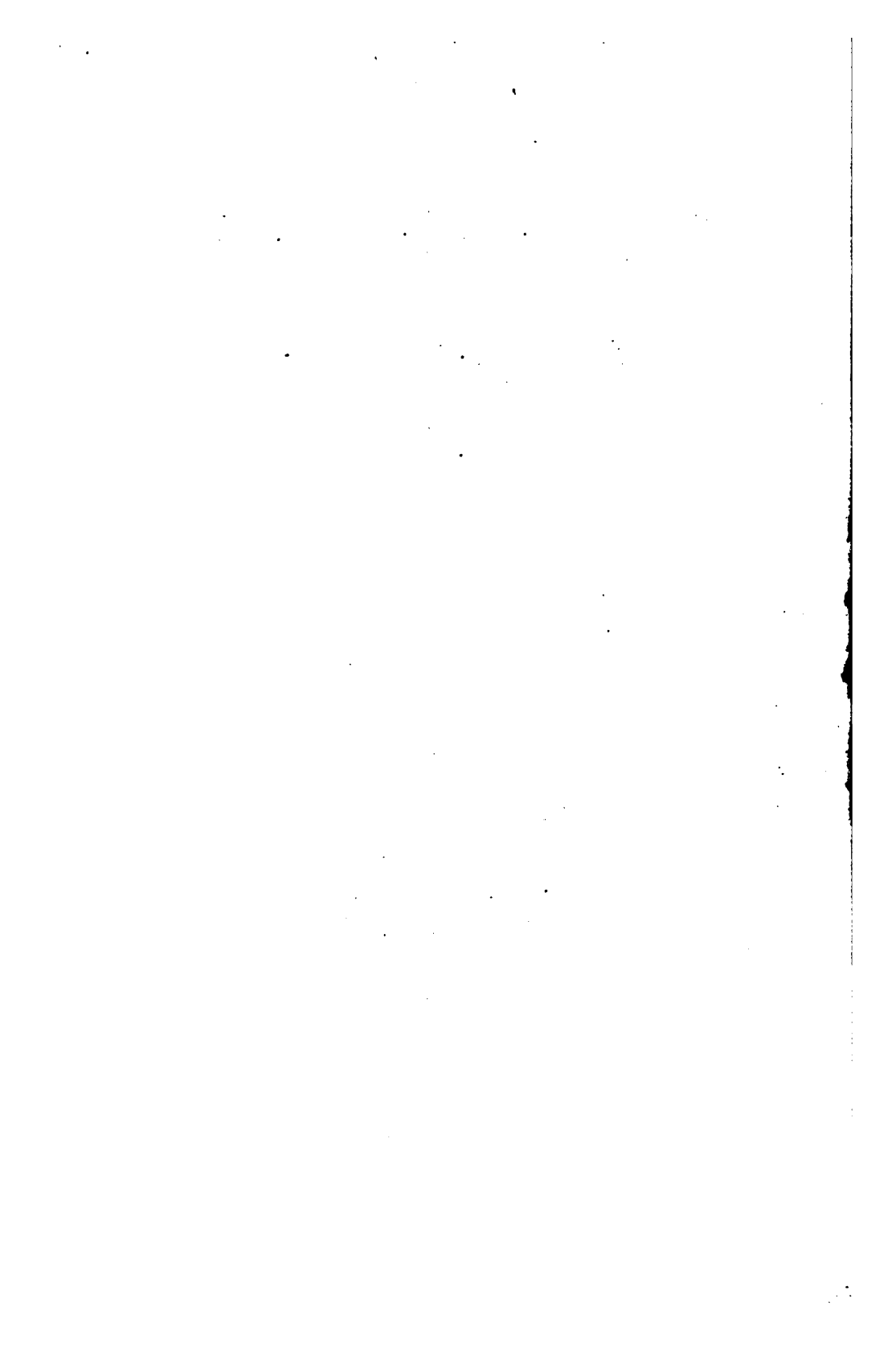
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THE
COMMEDIA AND CANZONIERE
OF
DANTE ALIGHIERI

Com 1

Plumptre

A. 1

1012

"The Poet in a golden clime was born,
With golden stars above,
Dowered with the hate of hate, the scorn of scorn,
The love of love."

TENNYSON

"At the Round Table of King Arthur there was left always one seat vacant for him who should accomplish the adventure of the Holy Grail. It was called the 'perilous seat,' because of the dangers he must encounter who would win it. In the company of the Epic poets there was a place left for whoever should embody the Christian idea of a triumphant life, outwardly all defeat, inwardly victorious, who should make us partakers of that cup of sorrow in which all are communicants with Christ. He who should do this would indeed achieve the 'perilous seat,' for he must combine poesy with doctrine in such cunning wise, that one lose not its beauty nor the other its severity—and Dante has done it."

J. R. LOWELL





DANTE ALIGHIERI



FROM THE TORRIGIANI BUST AT FLORENCE.

MADE FROM A CAST TAKEN AFTER DEATH

AT RAVENNA A.D. 1321.

Vincent Brooks Day & Son, Lith.

THE
COMMEDIA AND CANZONIERE
OF
DANTE ALIGHIERI

A NEW TRANSLATION

With Notes Essays and a Biographical Introduction

BY E. H. PLUMPTRE D.D.

DEAN OF WELLS

"Ergo vivida vis animi pervicit, et extra
Processit longe flammania mœnia mundi."
Lucret. i. 72

IN TWO VOLUMES

VOL. II.

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1887

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TO
OUR SOVEREIGN LADY,
Victoria,
BY THE GRACE OF GOD,
QUEEN OF GREAT BRITAIN AND IRELAND
AND
EMPRESS OF INDIA,
This Volume,
PUBLISHED IN A YEAR OF JUBILEE
HAPPIER THAN THAT OF WHICH DANTE WROTE,
IS DEDICATED,
BY HER MAJESTY'S GRACIOUS PERMISSION.

VITA NUOVA.

To bear the burden of an Empire's care,
The ruler of a people proud and free,
This was the New Life, Lady, given to thee,
When yet the dawn of youth was gleaming fair.
Then came a Newer Life, more rich and rare,
Soul knit with soul, abiding unity,
The open page where all the world might see
The pattern of a bliss beyond compare.
Then through the vale of shadows thou wast led,
Bearing thy Cross, though wearer of a Crown :
Men might have deemed that hope and joy had fled,
That thou must walk away with eyes cast down.
Lo ! yet a NEW LIFE waits thee ere the night :
Calm and serene, at eventide 'tis light.

PREFACE.

THE appearance of this volume has been delayed by illness and by some grave anxieties. The kindness of the friends who have helped me in seeing it through the press has, I hope, been a sufficient safeguard against the imperfections which might otherwise have resulted from these causes. Among those friends I have, as before, to tender my special thanks to Mr. J. A. Picton, M.P., the Rev. H. W. Pereira, and Colonel Gillum for many valuable suggestions, and to add to their names, as regards the present volume, those of Mr. C. J. Pickering, and Dr. R. Garnett of the British Museum. For valuable help given in connexion with special points I have to thank Cardinal Manning and Father William Lockhart, Mr. H. J. S. Cotton, Mr. Ernest Newton, Mr. Reginald Barratt. I wish also to make a grateful acknowledgment of the loving labour of Mr. Pereira in the preparation of the Indices of both volumes, which add in no small measure to the completeness of the work.

In translating the Minor Poems, I have thought it best to follow the order of Fraticelli's edition, as being at least an attempt at the chronological arrangement which throws most light on Dante's life and character, and have, with one or two exceptions, confined myself to those which he has received as genuine. My limits have not allowed me to discuss in detail the arguments for or against the authenti-

city of the poems not in Fraticelli's text, which Witte has admitted into his collection. I have so far yielded to the authority of tradition as to include the Metrical Paraphrase of the Creed, the Decalogue, and the Lord's Prayer that have been ascribed to Dante. The Eclogues which passed between the poet and his friend Joannes de Virgilio appear, I believe, for the first time in an English version. I have ventured on giving "headings" to the Sonnets and Canzoni as indicating their leading thoughts.

Want of space has hindered me, even after the most liberal allowance on the part of the publishers, from fully carrying out the programme of *Dante Studies* announced in the first volume. Those which now appear will, I hope, be found of some interest. The others must wait for a more or less distant opportunity, or, more probably, be left to other hands.

I have no reason, on the whole, to complain of the reception which my work has so far met with at the hands of its critics. It is not my intention to convert my preface into an *apologia*, discussing the points which they have raised, either as to my translation or my biography, and I am content to endeavour to profit, as I best may, alike by their praise or blame. A translator of Dante has spent his labour in vain if he has not learnt to say *Lascia dir le genti*.

E. H. P.

Oct. 20th, 1887.

TABLE OF CONTENTS.

I. DEDICATORY SONNET	v
II. PREFACE	vii

Paradise.

CANTO	PAGE
I. Invocation—Ascent to the First Heaven—The Poet's Transfiguration	1
II. The Heaven of the Moon—Theories of its Spots	7
III. Diversity of Rewards—Unity of Blessedness—The Souls who have not Kept their Vows—Piccarda—Constance	13
IV. The Poet's Questions—Do Souls Return to the Stars?—Free-will and Force as Factors in Broken Vows	18
V. The Doctrine of Dispensations—The Second Heaven, of Mercury—The Love of Fame	23
VI. Justinian—The Flight of the Roman Eagle—The Pilgrim Romeo	29
VII. Dogmas—The Sin of Adam—The Incarnation—The Corruptible and Incorruptible	35
VIII. The Third Heaven, of Venus—Charles Martel of Hungary—Eternal Providence—Diversities of Gifts	40
IX. The Lovers in the Heaven of Venus—Cunizza—Folco of Marseilles—Rahab	46
X. The Fourth Heaven, of the Sun—The Theologians—Albert of Cologne—Thomas Aquinas, and others	53
XI. Life of St. Francis of Assisi, as told by Thomas Aquinas	60
XII. The Life of St. Dominic as told by St. Bonaventura	65
XIII. The Mysteries of Human Birth and of the Incarnation—The Wisdom of Solomon	72
XIV. The Fifth Heaven, of Mars—The Starry Cross—The Souls of Martyrs and Crusaders	78
XV. Cacciaguida—The Good Old Times of Florence	83
XVI. Cacciaguida's History of the Greatness and Fall of Florence	89
XVII. Cacciaguida's Prophecy of Dante's Exile—Can Grande della Scala	97
XVIII. The Sixth Heaven, of Jupiter—The Souls of Righteous Kings—The Starry Eagle	103

CANTO	PAGE
XIX. The Eagle on the Conditions of Salvation—The Hope of the Heathen—Condemnation of Unrighteous Kings	108
XX. The Eagle's Praises of Righteous Kings—William the Good—Rhipeus—Trajan	115
XXI. The Seventh Heaven, of Saturn—The Star-Ladder of Contemplation—St. Peter Damian	121
XXII. St. Benedict's Lamentations over his Order—Dante in Gemini—The Backward Look from the Eighth Heaven, of the Fixed Stars	126
XXIII. The Stars of the Triumph of Christ—The Rose and the Lilies—The Hymn "Regina Coeli"	132
XXIV. St. Peter Examines Dante as to Faith—Trinity in Unity .	137
XXV. St. James Examines Dante as to Hope	144
XXVI. St. John Examines Dante as to Love—The Soul of Adam	149
XXVII. St. Peter on his Corrupt Successors—The Ascent to the Primum Mobile—The Evil of the Times	155
XXVIII. The Central Sun—The Hierarchy of Angels in Concentric Circles	161
XXIX. Beatrice on the Creation and Fall of Angels, and on the Faults and Follies of Preachers	167
XXX. The Tenth Heaven—The Empyrean—Beatrice in Glory—The River of Light—The Flowers and the Sparks of Paradise—The Eternal Rose—Henry of Luxemburg	173
XXXI. The Rose of Heaven—St. Bernard takes the place of Beatrice	179
XXXII. The Saints in the Rose of Heaven—St. John Baptist, Rachel, Beatrice, Lucia, and others	185
XXXIII. St. Bernard's Prayer to the Blessed Virgin—The Beatific Vision of the Eternal Trinity and the Word made Flesh	191

Canzoniere.

SONNET	I. The First Vision of Love	199
"	II. What might have been	200
BALLATA	I. "De Profundis"	201
SONNET	III. Death of Beatrice's Friend (1)	202
BALLATA	II. Death of Beatrice's Friend (2)	203
SONNET	IV. Love as Pilgrim	204
"	V. Separation	205
CANZONE	I. The Lover's Plea for Pity	205
BALLATA	III. Eyes Dim with Sorrow	208
"	IV. "Apologia pro Vita Sua"	209
SONNET	VI. Inner Conflict	210
"	VII. Transformation	211

CONTENTS.

xi

		PAGE
SONNET	VIII. Drunk, but not with Wine	212
"	IX. "Nec Morbos, nec Remedia Pati Possumus"	213
CANZONE	II. Laudes Beatricis	213
"	III. Retrospection	216
SONNET	X. The Birth of Love	219
"	XI. Beatrice's Salutation	220
"	XII. Beatrice's Sorrow (1)	221
"	XIII. Beatrice's Sorrow (2)	221
"	XIV. The Company of Mourners	222
"	XV. What Tidings of Beatrice?	223
CANZONE	IV. Forebodings	223
SONNET	XVI. Giovanna and Beatrice	226
"	XVII. "Beatrice, God's True Praise"	227
"	XVIII. The Beauty of Holiness	228
"	XIX. All Saints' Day, 1289	228
BALLATA	V. Dawning of New Hope	229
SONNET	XX. Credentials Withdrawn	230
"	XXI. Repulsion and Attraction	230
"	XXII. The Moth and the Candle	231
CANZONE	V. "The Fear of Death is Fallen upon Me"	232
STANZA	Sighs for Beatrice's Greeting	234
CANZONE	VI. Beatrice in Paradise	235
SONNET	XXXIII. Grief too Deep for Tears	237
CANZONE	VII. Beatrice with the Angels	238
SONNET	XXIV. A Year After	239
"	XXV. The Relief of Tears	240
"	XXVI. Sorrow Finding Sympathy	241
"	XXVII. The Wanderings of the Eyes	241
"	XXVIII. Pity Akin to Love	242
"	XXIX. Sighs and Thoughts	243
"	XXX. Pilgrims in Florence	243
"	XXXI. Beatrice Transfigured	244
CANZONE	VIII. Pain of Separation	245
"	IX. The Lover's Threats	248
SONNET	XXXII. The Lover's Anathema	250
BALLATA	VI. Ignorance in Asking	251
"	VII. Memories	252
"	VIII. The Garland	252
SONNET	XXXIII. Love's Sovereignty	253
"	XXXIV. The Envoy's Instructions	254
"	XXXV. For Others' Sake	255
BALLATA	IX. Terrible in Beauty	256
SONNET	XXXVI. Beautiful and Pitiless	257
"	XXXVII. A Cry for Help	258
"	XXXVIII. Disappointment	258
"	XXXIX. Stellar Influences	259
BALLATA	X. The Scorn of Scorn	260
SESTINA	I. Similitudes of Love	261

	PAGE
SESTINA II. Similitudes of Love	263
" III. Similitudes of Love	264
CANZONE X. Hard as a Rock	265
" XI. Winter	268
" XII. Return of Spring	270
" XIII. Love's Service	273
" XIV. The Angels of the Third Heaven	277
" XV. The Miracle of Beauty	279
" XVI. True Nobility	282
" XVII. Virtus Sola Nobilitas	288
" XVIII. Freedom and Bondage	292
" XIX. The Three Exiles	297
" XX. Laudes Florentiæ	301
SONNET XL. Friendly Warning	304
" XLI. Quis Locus Ingenio?	305
" XLII. Rivals or Partners	305
" XLIII. Fair but Cruel	306
" XLIV. Faith and Unfaith	307
BALLATA XI. The Beatific Vision	308
" XII. Spring-tide Joy	308
SONNET XLV. What is Love?	310
" XLVI. Spring after Winter	311
" XLVII. Gold Tried in the Fire	312
" XLVIII. Ad Misericordiam	312
" XLIX. Strength in Weakness	313
CANZONE XXI. In Memoriam	314
Dante's Confession of Faith	318
Credo	318
Sacramenta	321
Decalogus	323
Septem Peccata Mortalia	324
Paternoster	324
Ave Maria	325

ECLOGUES.

I. Johannes de Virgilio to Dante Alighieri	326
II. Dante Alighieri to Johannes de Virgilio	329
III. Johannes de Virgilio to Dante Alighieri	333
IV. Dante Alighieri to Johannes de Virgilio	337

Studies.

I. The Genesis and Growth of the "Commedia."	345
Part I. Hell	365
" II. Purgatory	374
" III. Paradise	394

CONTENTS.

xiii

	PAGE
II. Estimates, Contemporary and Later	409
Part I. Contemporary	409
" II. England	424
" III. Italy	431
" IV. England	437
" V. France	466
" VI. Germany	480
" VII. America	496
III. Dante as an Observer and Traveller	504
IV. Portraits of Dante	529
L'Envoi	533

Index of Subjects and Names	535
Index of First Lines of the Minor Poems (Italian and Latin)	555
Index of First Lines of the Minor Poems (Translation)	557
Index of Scripture Texts	559
Errata	xiv

ERRATA.

VOL. I

- Page xxiii, V., and page 199, for "Buon Conte," read "Buonconte,"
 " xlv, line 29, and xlv, line 2. Both dates, 1274 and 1279, should be followed by (?).
 " lvi, line 5 from foot, for "*Dantes theologus*," read "*Theologus Dantes*."
 " lix, line 18, after "O.M." insert "III."
 " xcii, line 4 from foot, for "25th," read "27th."
 " xcvi, line 10, for "November 7," read "November 27."
 " cxiii, note, line 2, for "1814," read "1314."
 " cxix, line 13, for "auto de fé," read "auto da fé."
 " 15, line 5 from foot, for "1410," read "1310."
 " 23, line 3 from foot, for "Heracleus," read "Heracleitus."
 " 26, line 23, for "framed," read "owned."
 " 123, line 3 from foot, for "*Vulg.*" read "*Volg.*"
 " 128, last line, for "Commentators," read "Commedia."
 " 142, last line, for "Angiolello," read "Angioletto."
 " 167, line 32, for "Guarlandi," read "Gualandi."
 " 177, line 9 from foot, "for "noon," read "morn."
 " 190, line 10, for "he," read "be."
 " 192, line 4 from foot, for "back," read "beck."
 " 193, note on 115, for "Arragon," read "Aragon."
 " 216, note on 112, for "Nov. 20," read "March 30."
 " 221, line 7 from foot. "In Eridanus," read "and;" and for "Meridian," read "Eridanus."
 " 232, line 17, *dele* "to."
 " 253, line 9, for "da Calboli," read "de' Calboli."
 " 256, line 13, for "coming," read "grievous."
 " 270, note on line 97, "*Quid prosunt . . .*" read "*Quid leges, sine moribus, vane proficiunt?*"
 " 292, line 17, *dele* " , " after "see."
 " 296, line 2 from foot, *dele* "with her shears."
 " 310, line 20, for "ere," read "e'er."
 " 318, last note, for "11," read "22."
 " 368, lines 4-9, substitute the following :
 And Beatrice, breathing many a sigh,
 And sad, in such wise listening stood, her hue
 With Mary's pallor at the cross might vie ;
 But when the others from their song withdrew,
 Then, standing up to speak, aloud cried she,
 And answer made, all fiery red to view :
 " 372, line 2, read "Those words I hoped my longing thirst would cool."
 " 372, line 23, after "meridian" add "bright."
 " 377, col. 2, *dele* "Thomas Carlyle, 98."

VOL. II.

- Page 326, line 2 from foot (n), for "Mussato," read "Musatto."
 " 382, last line (n), for "*Essays on*," read "*Essays in*."
 " 387, last line, for "*exultavi*," read "*exultabo*."
 " 389, line 10, for "Isai. xlv. 2," read "Isai. xlv. 22."
 " 399, line 2 from foot (n), for "*ancilles*," read "*ancilla*."

PARADISE.

PARADISE.

CANTO I.

Invocation—Ascent to the First Heaven—The Poet's Transfiguration.

THE glory bright of Him who moveth all
Doth penetrate the universe, and shine,
In one part more, while less doth elsewhere fall.
I to that Heaven which most His light divine
Receives, had come, and saw things which to tell 5
Lack power and skill who pass to lower line;
Because, the closer comes our mind to dwell
With that it longs for, it so deep doth go,
That memory faileth to renew the spell.
Yet all I could in my mind's treasure stow 10
Of that high realm of perfect holiness,
In this my song shall now its subject know.
O good Apollo! these last labours bless,
And make me such a vessel of thy grace,
That I thy dear-loved laurel may possess. 15

¹ As indicated in the last line of *Purgatory*, the pilgrimage through Paradise is a journey through the starry heavens, as they were conceived in the Ptolemaic system. The earth is the centre of the universe, and the nine spheres (answering to the circles of *Hell* and *Purgatory*) are those of the Moon, Mercury, Venus, the Sun, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn, the Fixed Stars, and the *Primum Mobile*. Beyond all these, in what we may call the Christian addition to Ptolemy's astronomy, is the Empyrean Heaven, the dwelling-place of God, and the real abode of the blessed ones, who yet manifest themselves, according to their characters and degrees of bliss, in the lower spheres. The poem opens with what is, in fact, a reminiscence of its close. He had been in that Empyrean (l. 4), and, like St. Paul in *Paradise* (2 *Cor.* xii. 2-4; 1 *Cor.* ii. 9), had seen what surpassed human speech (*Conv.* ii. 4; *Ep. to C. G.* c. 24). All that he can do is to retrace his journey thither, as far as his powers allowed him.

¹³ The poet had invoked the Muses in *H.* ii. 7, xxxii. 10, and again, specially Calliope, in *Purg.* i. 9. Now he turns from them to their Lord and Master, the source of all light and inspiration, Apollo being for him the symbol of divine illumination, as the "*sommus Giove*" of *Purg.* vi. 118 had been of the sovereignty of the Christ.

¹⁵ Possibly an aspiration, like that of l. 26 and C. xxv. 9, after the outward honours of the laureate-poet.

So far one peak that crowns Parnassus' face
 Was found enough, but now, with aids from twain,
 I needs must enter the ring's vacant space.
 Oh, enter then my breast, and breathe again,
 As when poor Marsyas' carcase thou didst skin, 20
 And strip the sheath which did his limbs contain.
 O Power Divine! if I such grace may win,
 That I the shadow of the Kingdom blest
 Should now make known, thus stamped my brain within,
 Thou shalt see me by thy loved laurel rest, 25
 And with those leaves I then shall crown my head,
 Both through my theme, and thee, owned worthiest.
 So seldom, Father, are they gatherèd
 For Cæsar's triumph or for poet's brow,
 (O sin and shame in human natures bred!), 30
 That joy from the Peneian leaf should flow
 To the all-joyous Delphic deity,
 When any eager for its wreath doth grow.
 A little spark will make the flame rise high,
 And after me, perchance, with tones more sweet, 35
 One will so pray that Cirrha may reply.

¹⁸ Of the two summits of Parnassus (*Met.* i. 316) one was sacred to Bacchus and the Muses, the other to Apollo himself (*Luc.* v. 73). S. T. Coleridge (MS. note in Cary's *Dante* in Brit. Mus.) finds a mystic meaning in the passage. "In other words, the poet says: Hitherto the poet and the moralist have sufficed, but henceforward the philosopher must be added. But how? *Hic labor est.* Both the powers of the intellect, the discursive sensuous and the rational supersensuous, must unite at their summits."

²⁰ The thought which lies on the surface is that Dante thinks of his critics with something of the same divine "scorn of scorn" which Apollo showed for Marsyas. A striking but perhaps over-subtle thought is suggested by S. T. Coleridge, as before, in a MS. note in Cary. "Dante asks for an evacuation or exinanition of all self in him, like the unsheathing of Marsyas, that so he may become a mere vessel or wine-skin of the Deity."

²² Apollo is addressed as the father of all true poets. The complaint is that neither the Emperors nor the poets of his time were worthy of the laurel crown. Their failure was the guilt and shame of human wills. The lines, if written after the failure of Henry VII.'s enterprise, may be Dante's protest against the stiff-necked generation who would not recognise either their true Emperor or their true poet.

²³ Daphne (= the laurel) was the daughter of Peneus (*Met.* i. 453-476). Her tree ought to gladden the Delphic deity with fresh foliage when any one was found to aspire (as Dante himself was now aspiring) to the true ideal of poetry. Comp. *Purg.* xxiv. 49-62.

²⁴ The comparison appears also in *Conv.* iii. 1. Is the humility real or feigned? Did Dante think of himself as only leading the way to a higher school of poetry in the future than had obtained in the past? Did he think that better voices than his own would ask for the highest inspiration with a greater prospect of success? That view seems to me, on the whole, the truest? The thought expressed is that of one who, while conscious of great gifts, which, as in *H.* iv. 100, placed him on a level with the great poets of the world, and above all his contemporaries, feels that he has fallen "on evil tongues and evil days," and fails therefore to attain his own ideal. That consciousness of failure is, one might almost say, the note of the supreme artist. Cirrha is identified by Dante with Delphi, and so with Apollo.

At different points our mortal gaze doth greet
 The world's great lamp, but at that point where we
 Four circles, with three crosses blending, meet,
 With happier course and happier stars we see 40
 It issue, and the wax of this our earth
 Fashion and mould in more complete degree.
 On this side noon, that midnight, neared their birth;
 And wholly bright was all one hemisphere,
 The other swathed in gloom through all its girth, 45
 When to the left I looked, beholding there
 My Beatrice, turned to see the sun;
 Never did eagle's glance so fixed appear.
 And as a second ray is wont to run
 Forth from the first, and reascend on high, 50
 Like pilgrim turning when his course is done,
 So from her act, upon my phantasy
 Through sight impressed, my own its birth did take,
 And on the sun fixed unaccustomed eye.
 There much may be that here the law would break 55
 Which our sense limits, thanks to that high place,
 Fashioned that there mankind their home might make.

³⁷⁻³⁸ Matilda and Statius disappear from the scene, and the poet is alone with Beatrice. It is the dawn of the day, and the time is defined astronomically, after Dante's manner, as that when the three circles, the equator, the ecliptic, and the equinoctial colure meet, forming three crosses with the horizon, *i.e.*, when the sun is in Aries, as in *H. i.* 38-40, with all its memories of the Creation, Incarnation, and Crucifixion, and its supposed beneficent influences on plants, animals, and men. Readers will note the recurrence of the "seal and wax" imagery of *Purg. xxxiii.* 79.

⁴⁴ The word *quasi* is added because it was not precisely the equinox. *A v. l.* connects it, however, with *tutto*.

⁴⁵ Morning, or mid-day (*Purg. xxxiii.* 104), in the hemisphere of Purgatory, night in that of earth. Dante writes from his standpoint as a mortal man, not from that of the vision.

⁴⁶ The comparison reminds one of the hymn of Adam of St. Victor on the Evangelists, speaking of St. John—

*"Volat avis sine meta,
 Quo nec vates nec propheta
 Evolvit altius;"*

and suggests that here too there is a mystic, or at least a moral, meaning. Divine Wisdom gazes upon the sun as the symbol of the Uncreated Light. The soul, purified and strengthened, turns to the same source of illumination. The ray passes from the sun to the eye of Beatrice, then to that of Dante, then, as a pilgrim to its home, turns to the sun again. Was there, mingling with the mysticism, a memory of the eyes of the personal Beatrice? Had Dante prepared himself for the *Paradise* by a special study, fuller than before, both of optics and astronomy? The facts that will meet us (*C. ii.* 64-148, *xxii.* 133-154, *xxv.* 100, *xxix.* 1-6) lead me to answer the latter question in the affirmative (*vol. i.* p. xcii.) The moment described is that selected by Ary Scheffer in his picture of "Dante and Beatrice," now in the possession of Mr. Perrins of Great Malvern.

⁵⁵⁻⁵⁷ The region made for the human race is the Earthly Paradise. There the soul gains new powers, and can gaze on what before it shrank from.

Not long I bore it, nor for such short space
 But that I saw the sparks fly all around,
 As molten iron from furnace flows apace. 60
 And suddenly it seemed as day were found
 Added to day, as though the Omnipotent
 With yet another sun the heaven had crowned.
 And Beatrice, with her whole gaze bent
 On the eternal spheres, stood still, and then 65
 I, with my glance down-turned and eyes intent,
 In gazing on her, felt within as when
 Glaucos of old of that strange herb did eat,
 Which with the sea-gods made him denizen.
 To paint that life transhumanised unmeet 70
 Were any words : this instance may suffice
 Him for whom Grace keeps that experience sweet.
 If I was then all Thou didst last devise
 In Thy creative work, Supreme Love,
 Thou know'st, Who with Thy light did'st bid me rise. 75
 When that high sphere Thou dost for ever move
 With strong desire, my thoughts towards it drew
 By music Thou dost temper and approve,
 It seemed as though the sky so fiery grew
 With the sun's flame, that never rain nor flood 80
 A lake across a wider surface threw.

58 With a subtle adroitness Dante does not describe his ascent. All that he is conscious of is that the sun glows more and more, sparkling like molten iron. The light is that of two suns (comp. *Isai.* xxx. 26). He is, in the cosmology of the time, in the sphere of fire which revolved between the earth and the moon. Beatrice still gazes on the heavens, but his gaze, shrinking from the brightness, turns to her. And with that gaze there comes something like an apotheosis, or at least a transfiguration, of his human nature. The story of Glaucos, who, as he tasted of the plant that grew on the sea-shore, was changed into a sea-god (*Met.* v. 930), comes into his mind as a parable of his own transformation. The word "transhumanise"—to pass from the human to the divine—which Dante coins for the purpose, reminds us that we are in the scholastic period of language, which condensed a great dogma into the one word Transubstantiation. Such a change could not be told in words ; it might be apprehended by those who had a like experience.

74 The Love which rules the heavens—the phrase comes from *Beeth.* ii. 8, 15, "*Calo imperitans Amor*"—is identified in C. xxxiii. 145 with God the Creator.

76 The thought is that given more fully in *Conv.* ii. 4, *Ep.* to C. G. c. 26, that the *Primum Mobile* moves with an immeasurable velocity in its desire to unite itself with the Empyrean in its eternal rest, as the dwelling-place of God. Coleridge (MS. note *ut supra* in note on l. 16) translates "Dost sempiternalise as thing desired," as against Cary's "Which Thou dost ever guide, desired Spirit ;" but his rendering leaves it uncertain whether the "thing desired" is God or the sphere that He makes eternal.

78 The Pythagorean and Platonic thought of the music of the spheres (C. vi. 126 ; *Purg.* xxx. 93) was probably learnt from Cic. *Somn. Scip.* c. 5, where the eight spheres are represented as forming a complete musical octave. With this music sounding in his ears, the pilgrim's eyes are met by a great sea of fire which flows around him. He has passed the

The strange new sounds and wondrous light imbued
 My soul with such desire the cause to know,
 As never until then had stirred my blood.
 And she who, as I saw myself, e'en so 85
 Saw me, to set my troubled soul at rest,
 Spake ere I spake, and from her mouth did flow
 These words: "Thyself art by thyself opprest
 With false conceptions, that thou canst not see
 What thou would'st see, could'st thou their course arrest. 90
 Thou art not on the earth, as seems to thee ;
 But lightning, fleeing from its proper seat,
 Ne'er moved as thou, who back to thine dost flee."
 If my first doubt I thus beheld retreat,
 Through those few words which, as she smiled them, sped,
 Within a new net tangled were my feet : 95
 And thus I spake : "Awhile my wonder fled,
 And I had rest, but now I marvel why
 Above these bodies light I nimbly tread."
 And she, first breathing out a pitying sigh, 100
 Turned her full gaze, with such a look on me,
 As mother on her boy's insanity ;
 And thus began : "A law of order due
 Have all things 'mong themselves ; a unity
 That makes the world to God bear likeness true. 105

flammaria mania mundi (*Lucret.* i. 76). He asks in his wonder, "How can these things be?" The answer reveals the truth. He has, without knowing it, left the earth and is in the sphere of fire.

⁸⁵ Lightning leaves its own region, the sphere of fire; the soul returns to its heavenly birthplace, the object of its desires (*Purg.* xvi. 85-90; *Comp.* iv. 18), and therefore, when freed from the hindrance of sin, with an infinitely greater velocity. *Comp.* II. 137-142.

⁹⁵ The grace of the original "*sorriso paroletto*" is almost or altogether untranslatable. The new wonder is how he in mortal flesh can rise into the higher spheres. Is the law of gravitation suspended?

¹⁰² Another study of child-nature. A reminiscence of early home-days brings before him the picture of a mother watching over a sick child in the delirium of fever. Did the marvellous precocity of which *V. N. c. 1* tells us affect for a time the boy's brain? Did the poet remember his own mother's anxious tenderness at that time?

¹⁰⁸⁻¹⁰⁹ The words are an echo of Aquinas. There is a twofold order in the universe—one that which determines the relation of the parts to each other; the other that which determines the relation of the whole to God. The universe, finding thus its centre in God, so far resembles God, who is a centre to Himself (*Summ.* I. 21. 1, 47. 3, 103. 4.) *Comp. Mon.* i. 6, and Hooker, *E. P.* I. 3, 4. For those who cannot read Aquinas I recommend the study of the first book of Hooker as the best training for understanding the *Paradiso*. Here, e.g., his words are almost as a quotation: "Things natural . . . observe their certain laws . . . and, as long as they keep those forms which give them their being, . . . cannot be apt to do . . . otherwise than they do."

The higher creatures here the impress see
 Of that Eternal Power, which is the end
 Whereto that self-same law must subject be.
 And in that order things diversely tend,
 Some more, some less, according to their kind, 110
 In nearness to the Source whence they descend.
 To diverse ports their several ways they wind
 O'er the great sea of Being, and each one,
 With impulse given to seek the part assigned.
 This beareth fire on high towards the moon ; 115
 This is in mortal hearts the motive spring ;
 By this the earth its form compact hath won.
 Nor only doth this bow from off its string
 Shoot forth the things without intelligence,
 But those who with them Love and Reason bring. 120
 That which thus orders all things, Providence,
 Doth with its light the heaven keep ever still,
 Wherein that turns whose speed is most immense ;
 And thither now, as to site fixed by Will,
 That bow-string's power mysterious bears us on, 125
 Which at glad mark to aim its darts hath skill.
 True is it that, as oft accord is none
 Between the form and purpose of an art,
 Through the brute matter that we work upon,

106 "Here" refers not to the sphere of flame, but the order of the universe. The higher creatures are those, men on earth or in Heaven, or angels, who have the power to discern that order, and to trace the vestiges of the Creator, as the Will which appoints the end to which all is subservient (*Prov.* xvi. 4; *SUMM.* i. 44. 4). And the creatures severally, according to their relative nearness to God, tend in a stream of being, which in intelligent creatures ripens into volition, to that centre. All are seen moving on the "great sea" of existence, and so for man even death brings him, if he has been true to the law of his being, to the "haven where he would be" (*Conv.* iv. 28; *SUMM.* ii. q. 102. 2).

115 Fire rises—so taught mediæval physics—towards the moon, as seeking its own home in the sphere of fire which lies above the air. And, with an anticipation of later thoughts, scientific and religious, Dante finds the same law working, as throughout the material universe, so in the wills of men (*Hooker, E. P.* i. 5, 1, 2).

121 The "quiet heaven" is the Empyrean, within which the *Primum Mobile* revolves (*Conv.* ii. 4).

124 The ascent of Beatrice and Dante had then been an illustration of the universal law. They gravitated *upwards*. One notes, though there is no evidence that he studied Dante, the parallelism of Keble's *Christian Year*:

"Heaven will o'ercome the attraction of my birth,
 And I shall sink in yonder sea of light."—*Twelfth Sunday after Trinity*.

127 The thought is almost a commonplace of the schools. Art requires (1) the mind of the artist; (2) an idea conceived by him as an end; (3) material to work on. Defects in either lead to incompleteness (*Mon.* ii. 2; *Conv.* ii. 1; *SUMM.* i. 15. 1, 17. 1). So in the moral and material universe there are exceptions to the law. The creature's freedom may deviate from the path which leads to its final good; the fire may fall from the cloud, con-

So from this course too often doth depart 130
 The creature, which retaineth yet the power,
 Though thus impelled, on other lines to start,—
 Even as one may see, when tempests lower,
 Fire from the clouds fall—if first impulse true
 To earth is drawn by false joy of the hour. 135
 Nor, if I judge well, is more wonder due
 To thy ascent than to a rivulet,
 Which from a high mount flows the low vale through.
 Wonder it would be if, with nought to let
 Or hinder, thou wert seated still below, 140
 As if on earth swift flame should linger yet.”
 And then once more her gaze did heavenward go.

CANTO II.

The Heaven of the Moon—Theories of its Spots.

O YE who follow me in little boat
 On this my voyage, eager still to hear,
 Behind my ship that sings as she doth float,
 Turn now and look where yet your shores appear;
 Into the wide sea put not out, lest ye, 5
 Me losing, should have nought whereby to steer.
 Where I sail on none yet hath tracked the sea;
 Breeze doth Minerva give, Apollo lead,
 And Muses nine point out the Bears to me.

trary to its nature. The error of the free agent is explained, as in *Purg.* xxx. 131, by his being misled by false shows of good. But of the soul in its true state it may be said, as Milton's rebel angels say, "Descent and fall to us is adverse." "You don't wonder," says Beatrice, "when a river flows down; why should it seem strange that man should rise?" The wonder and the pity of it is that men are so often willing that it should be otherwise, and live like Milton's Mammon, with "looks downward bent."

¹ A parallel and a contrast to *Purg.* i. 1-3. The poem is no longer a "*navicella*," but a ship which other boats follow. Like another Gideon (*Judg.* vii. 3), he bids all turn back except the noble few. In words which seem addressed prophetically to those who, like Voltaire and Goethe, Leigh Hunt and Savage Landor, have turned away in weariness and distaste from the philosophy and theology of the *Paradiso*, he warns those who have followed him hitherto that they had better turn to the shore. He is about to sail on an untried sea. Like Lucretius, he treads the "*avia Pieridum loca*," and passes beyond the "fiery ramparts of the world" (l. 76).

² A v. l. gives *novae pro nove*, "new Muses," but is probably the reading of an "improver" on Dante. Had the Muses been "new," we should have had also a new Minerva and Apollo. The Bears = *Ursa Major* and *Minor*, include the Pole Star as the guide of sailors.

Ye other few, who stretched your necks indeed 10
 Betimes in seeking for the angels' bread,
 Whereon, though still unsated, here we feed,
 Through the deep sea your voyage may be sped
 Right well, if ye will keep my furrowed way
 Upon the water, now more smoothly spread. 15
 Those heroes old, who sailed where Colchos lay,
 Wondered not half so much as ye will do,
 When they a ploughman's part saw Jason play.
 The concreate thirst, which lasts the ages through,
 Of that realm deiform upbore us high, 20
 Swift as the heavens which ye revolving view ;
 And Beatrice upward looked, and I
 On her ; and, e'en in such time as in air
 The bolt fixed in the cross-bow forth doth fly,
 I saw myself arrived where wonder rare 25
 Drew my gaze on it. Wherefore she—from whom
 I could not hide one thought of anxious care—
 Turned to me in her beauty's joyous bloom.
 "Raise thankful heart to God," she said, "who thus
 In the first planet hath for us found room." 30
 It seemed as though a cloud had covered us,
 Translucent, solid, dense, and full of light,
 Like diamond struck by sunbeam glorious ;
 Within itself that pearl eternal, bright,
 Received us, as a pool receives a ray, 35
 Nor doth its mirror-surface disunite.

¹⁰ The "bread of angels" (*Ps.* lxxviii. 25), the manna of the wilderness, is with Dante a favourite symbol of the higher wisdom (*Conv.* i. 1). On earth men live by it, but are never fully satisfied (*Eccles.* xv. 3, xxiv. 21), for we "know in part." Those who have eaten of that bread betimes, and they only, can follow him, and they must take care to keep in his wake.

¹⁶ For the wonder of the Argonauts when they saw Jason plowing with a yoke of fire-breathing oxen, see *Met.* iii. 120. Comp. *C.* xxxiii. 96.

¹⁹ The thirst is perpetual, for the ocean of Wisdom is inexhaustible (*Eccles.* xxiv. 29). The "deiform" kingdom (*C.* i. 105) is pre-eminently the Empyrean Heaven.

²¹ The ascent is as rapid (1) as the motion of the starry heavens, which apparently revolve round the earth in twenty-four hours ; (2) with a more familiar image, as a bolt shot from a crossbow ; and it takes them to the sphere of the moon, the first planet of the Ptolemaic system.

²⁷ A *v. l.* gives *ovra* for *curs* without much affecting the sense.

²⁸ We note the contrast between the poet's conception of the moon's appearance as a diamond on which the sun shines, a lucid "eternal pearl," and that which we find in Milton after Galileo's telescope had revolutionised men's thoughts of the heavens (*P. L.* iv. 606-609, vi. 12). The term "pearl" is applied to Mercury also (*C.* vi. 127).

If I a body was—and here no way
 We know two solids in one space may fare,
 As needs if body into body stray—
 So much the more should strong desire appear 40
 To see that Essence in the which is seen
 How with man's nature God His own can share.
 THERE shall we see what here by faith hath been
 By us received unproved, but then shall be
 Self-witnessed, as first truths man's credence win. 45
 I made reply: "Dear Lady, gratefully
 With all my soul my thanks to Him I give
 Who from that mortal world hath lifted me:
 But tell me what those dark spots we perceive
 In this same body are, which down below 50
 Make common folk the tale of Cain believe."
 She smiled a little, and then said: "If so
 The thoughts of mortals are in error found,
 Where key of sense fails through the wards to go,

³⁷ A new miracle presents itself. Dante, with his body subject to the laws of bodies, has entered another body. Here science pronounced that two bodies could not be in the same space at the same time (*Summ.* i. 67. 2), *naturaliter*, but only "*virtute Dei*" (*Summ.* iii. *Suppl.* 63. 2-4).

³⁸ The physical wonder leads on to the thought of the yet greater mystery of the Incarnation, the "perfect God and perfect Man," two natures in One Person, as in the language of the Creed, with which Dante was familiar, and the teaching of which he reproduces in C. xxxiii. Comp. also the *Credo* ascribed to him.

³⁹ "THERE," is the life eternal. What we now accept in faith, unproved, not as the result of deductive or inductive reasoning, but on the authority of Scripture and the Church, will then seem to us as an axiom, self-evident as the primal truths which are now the foundation of all reasoning. I will not enter on the discussion whether Dante thought of these as known intuitively, or received by an unconscious induction through the senses or by inherited experience.

⁴⁰ The episode stands on somewhat the same footing as the embryology of *Purg.* xxv. Dante has embraced a new scientific theory, and it has for him an irresistible fascination. He must correct the false theories of others and of his own earlier years. In *Conv.* ii. 14 he had discussed the same question—one of the favourite problems of mediæval physics—and had explained the moon's spots, as he does here (following Averroës), as rising from the different degrees of density in the moon's substance, some of the sun's rays penetrating farther than others, and therefore reflected with a diminished lustre. Now he explains them as caused by variations in the formal principle of luminosity. Roger Bacon alone, or all but alone, among the physicists of his time, taught with a like confidence the same theory. The moon's light with him is not reflected, but the proper light of the moon evolved through virtue of the sun from the potency of its matter (*Op. Terr.* c. 37). The coincidence takes its place in the list which make it probable that the two thinkers may have met, and that Bacon may have been to Dante what Galileo was to Milton (*C. R.* Dec. 1881). There is, however, if I mistake not, here also, as in *Purg.* xxv., a dogmatic bearing underlying the apparently physical discussion which gives it a new significance. The text of the "two great lights" (*Gen.* i. 16) was the favourite argument of the Popes who claimed authority over the Empire. The sun and the moon were symbols of the Church and the State, and the moon derived its light from the sun. "No," is Dante's answer. "I admit the symbolism, but I deny the fact. The moon shines by its own light. The Empire has its own independent right." Comp. *Mon.* iii. 4. For the legend of Cain see *H.* xx. 126, and Baring-Gould's *Curious Myths*, pp. 190-209.

No shafts of wonder should thy soul astound, 55
 Since now thou dost perceive that, following sense,
 The wings of reason move in narrowest bound.
 But tell me what to thy intelligence
 They seem." And I: "The varied aspect here
 Is caused, I deem, by bodies rare and dense." 60
 And she: "That thought of thine shall soon appear
 In falsehood sunk, if thou wilt list to me
 While I my adverse reasonings bid thee hear.
 In the eighth sphere full many an orb we see
 Which, in their *quale* and their *quantum* too, 65
 Of many a diverse kind and aspect be.
 If rare and dense alone all this could do,
 Then would be found in all one power alone,
 In measure more or less proportioned true.
 Virtues diverse are as the product known 70
 Of formal causes, and, save one, all these
 Would be on that hypothesis o'erthrown.
 Again, if those dark spots thy vision sees
 Were caused, as thou deem'st, by their rarity,
 Either this orb throughout were ill at ease, 75
 Its matter thinned, or, as in bodies lie
 The fat and lean in layers, so would this
 A change of pages in its book supply;
 And it were seen, on that hypothesis,
 Transparent in the sun's eclipse, as when 80
 Through rarer bodies light transmitted is.
 This is not so, and we may reason then
 Of that thy second premiss, which, if I
 Confute, thy view will false appear to men.

⁵⁵ We note the parallel with F. Bacon's phrase "flying on the wings of sense . . ." as he allegorises the myth of Icarus.

⁶⁰ Rarity seems identified by Dante with translucency. An eclipse of the sun shows that there is no such translucency in any part of the moon.

⁶⁴ By a *tour de force*, in which he felt, it may be, a conscious pride, as Milton obviously felt in his exposition of what he had learnt from Galileo (*P. L.* iii. 111), Dante puts a lecture, like his treatise *De Aquâ et Terrâ*, into eighty-eight lines of his *terza rima*. Each argument is distinctly stated: (1) The eighth sphere, that of the fixed stars, presents variations of brightness, one star differing from another star in glory; but there we do not bring in the reflection theory, with its appendages of denser and rarer portions in the moon's structure, as an explanation, but are content to ascribe their brightness and other virtues to their own proper formal causes. The words are almost a quotation from the treatise just mentioned (*Aq. Ter.* c. 21).

If through the whole pass not this rarity, 85
 Then must there be a boundary from whence
 Its opposite permits no passing by ;
 And so the foreign rays, reflected thence,
 Are as the colours mirrored from a glass,
 Which hides a leaden surface from our sense. 90
 Now, thou wilt say that there more dim doth pass
 The sunbeam than from any other place,
 As further back reflected in the mass.
 But that objection shall give way apace
 Before experience, if thou wilt it prove, 95
 To which, as fount, all streams of art you trace.
 Take thou three mirrors, two of them remove
 From thee at equal distance, and the last
 Between the two, and further from them, move ;
 And turned towards them let a light be cast, 100
 Behind thy back, upon those mirrors three,
 So that from all reflected rays are passed.
 Then, though the light which furthest stands from thee
 May not with them in magnitude compete,
 Yet will it shine in brightness equally. 105
 Now, as before the sun's rays in their heat
 The substance of the snow is naked seen,
 Stript both of hue and cold that erst did meet,
 So thee, to thy pure reason left, I mean
 To fill with such a clear and living light, 110
 That it shall dazzle thee with radiant sheen.
 Within the heaven where peace divine its site
 Hath found, revolves a body whose content
 In all its power from that heaven draws its might.

⁸⁶ It might be replied that the translucent matter did not go through the moon, but existed to such an extent as to put the portions which reflected the sun's rays at widely different distances, and so to produce different degrees of brightness. The answer is found in an experiment with mirrors (lead mirrors, as in *H.* xxiii. 25), entirely after Roger Bacon's manner (*Op. Tert.* c. 37. 11, 13). The brightness of the reflection of a luminous point did not vary with the distance of the mirror.

⁹¹ What Beatrice puts into the mouth of Dante is found almost *totidem verbis* in Avicenna (*De Cæl.* ii. 4, 61).

¹⁰⁷ As snow melts under the sun's rays, so will Dante's ignorance vanish before the light of truth. The "subject" of the snow may be either, scholastically, the substance, as distinguished from the accidents of form and colour, or more probably, etymologically, the earth that lies beneath the snow.

¹¹² The lines that follow set forth the ideal plan of the Ptolemaic system. The Empyrean, the abode of God, encircles all ; within it revolves the *Primum Mobile* (how far the *Primum*

Next this the heaven, which is with stars besprent, 115
 This power through divers natures doth divide,
 Distinguished from it, yet within it pent.
 The other spheres, in series varying wide,
 All things with several qualities endow,
 Each, e'en in germ, to its true end applied. 120
 These organs of the world move onward so,
 As thou see'st now, degree upon degree,
 Swayed from above and swaying those below.
 Look well on me, how I am leading thee
 Up to the truth which thou dost crave to learn, 125
 That thou to cross the ford alone may'st see.
 These powers and motions of the spheres that turn,
 As the smith wields the hammer's ponderous might.
 Must needs wheel on, by blessed Movers borne.
 And that same heaven, made fair by many a light, 130
 From the high Mind that doth its motion sway,
 The image takes, and with it seals aright.
 And, as your soul, within its house of clay,
 Through different members, severally designed
 To different powers, still finds its separate way, 135

Mobile impresses its motion upon the other spheres, Dante (*Conv.* ii. 6) thinks it presumptuous to inquire), and then the sphere of the fixed stars (l. 64). Then come the spheres of the planets, each receiving an influence from above, and transmitting it below, ordering their several attributes both to their appointed results and to the seeds or potencies that produce them (*Purg.* xxx. 110; *Conv.* ii. 7, 14, iv. 21). Dante borrows here from Aquinas (*Summ.* i. 106. 4), as he from Dionysius the Areopagite (*Hier. Cal.* c. 15).

125 The triumph of the discoverer of a new birth reminds us of *Æsch. Ag.* 757, "I, apart from others, alone in thought." For the simile of the ford, comp. *Purg.* viii. 69.

126 The movement of the hammer implies the smith (*Mon.* iii. 6; *Conv.* i. 13, iv. 4; Brun. Lat. *Trés.* ii. 30; Arist. *De An.* ii.); so that of the spheres implies agents that move them, and these, as ministers of God, must be angels. (Comp. *H.* vii. 74; *Conv.* ii. 6; *Caus.* 14; *Summ.* i. 110. 3.)

130 The "mind" that moves the sphere of the fixed stars is not that of God, but of the angel of the cherubic order, who is its appointed guardian (*Conv.* ii. 6). It receives from above an impress which becomes in its turn a seal, and leaves its impression on the spheres below.

135 The comparison comes from the *Timæus* of Plato (p. 29), probably through *Æn.* vi. 726-727—

"*Spiritus intus alit, totamque, infusa per artus,
 Mens agitat molem et magno se corpore miscet.*"

As the soul, working through its several senses, retains its unity, so does the angelic intelligence which works through the starry sphere. The different virtues of each sphere combine in like manner with its material fabric, "precious" as being eternal, and shine through it, as joy manifests itself in the human eye. And so the spots in the moon, as its greater and lesser brightness, are the results of different degrees of the formal principle of luminosity. A. J. Butler quotes the touching confession of F. Dante, the son who could not fathom his father's knowledge, "*Alia per te vide, imo omnia, quia nil vidi, nec intellexi.*" We are reminded somewhat painfully of Molière, "*L'opium endormit, parcequ'il a une vertu soporifique.*"

So spreads its goodness that supremest Mind,
 Through all the stars in phases manifold,
 Revolving still in unity defined;
 And diverse virtues diverse compounds mould
 With bodies precious which they animate, 140
 Wherein, as life in you, their place they hold.
 Through the glad nature which doth radiate,
 The infused virtue shines through body bright,
 As gladness doth your eyes illuminate.
 Hence comes it that there seems 'twixt light and light 145
 This variance, and not from dense and rare:
 This is the formal cause which works in might,
 Proportioned to its goodness, dull or clear."

CANTO III.

Diversity of Rewards—Unity of Blessedness—The Souls who have not kept their Vows—Piccarda—Constance.

THAT sun which erst with love had warmed my breast,
 Had, proving and reproving, shown to me
 The sweet aspect of truth with beauty blest;
 And I, to own myself from error free,
 And firm in faith as far as met the need, 5
 Lifted my head as if for colloquy.
 But then a vision came and bade me heed,
 And fixed my gaze with such a binding spell,
 That my confession I forgot to speed.
 E'en as in mirror clear and bright, or well 10
 Of waters pure and tranquil and serene,
 So deep, its bottom is just visible,

¹ The sun is, as in C. xxx. 75, Beatrice, as illuminating and vivifying Dante's intellect. So Virgil in *H.* xi. 91, and Philosophy in *Conv.* iv. 1.

² The two words "*provando e riprovando*," proving truth and refuting error, are said to have been taken as a motto by the Florentine Experimental Academy (*Accad. del Cimento*) as the true method of scientific discovery.

¹⁰ We seem to see the poet still in his optical laboratory. He sees as "through a glass darkly" (not in this instance in a mirror), faces that gleam through the moon's light, as a pearl is seen on a white forehead. Did he remember such a pearl on Beatrice's brow (*V. N.* c. 37)? I take *persi*, as in *H.* v. 89, vii. 103, for "dark," not as = *perduti*.

The features of our face by us are seen
 So faintly that a pearl on snow-white brow
 Meets not our gaze with stroke less quick and clean, 15
 So many faces prompt to speak I now
 Beheld, and into opposite error ran
 To his who love did to the fountain vow.
 And I, when to perceive them I began,
 Esteeming them as mirrored semblance vain, 20
 Turned mine eyes round me, whose they were to scan ;
 And nothing saw, and turned them back again,
 Straight to the light of that my sweetest Guide,
 Within whose holy eyes bright smiles did reign.
 "Let not thy spirit be with wonder tried," 25
 She said, "because I smiled at thy young thought,
 Since still thy foot from Truth's firm base doth glide,
 And turns thee, as is wont, to shadowy nought.
 True substances are these which thou dost see,
 Here set apart through vow they left unwrought. 30
 Wherefore speak with them ; hear, believing be ;
 For the true light which them doth satisfy
 Permitteth not their feet from it to flee."
 And to that shade which seemed most eagerly
 Converse to crave I turned, beginning so, 35
 As one on whom strong wish weighs heavily.
 "O Spirit, made for good, in whom doth glow
 The sweetness of the rays of life eterne,
 Which he who tastes not ne'er can fully know,

¹⁷ Narcissus (*Met.* iii. 415) mistook the reflection of his own form for reality. Dante mistook the real faces for reflections, and therefore looked behind him. We note the association of ideas with C. ii. 97.

²⁵ *Coto*=thought, is derived from *coitare*=*cogitare* (*Dies*, p. 106). It is said to have been commonly used by boys in their games at hide-and-seek, who, when they had found the thing sought for, cried out "*Coto!*" and is therefore, perhaps, used with a special appropriateness (*Scart.*)

³⁰ The words are the first that indicate the character of the souls who dwell in the moon's sphere, as the emblem of the mutability which, though it had not kept them out of Paradise, had yet placed them in the lowest of its spheres.

³⁴ The soul is that of Piccarda, the sister of Corso and Forese Donati (*Purg.* xxiv. 10 *ss.*) She entered the convent of St. Clara (the "Poor Clares" of the followers of St. Francis). Her brothers forced her into a marriage with Rossellino della Tosa. Corso was said (*Inf.*) to have done penance in his shirt for his offence, and Piccarda was removed by her death, for which she was said to have prayed (*Beniv.*), from her earthly to her heavenly bridegroom. Line 49 implies that Dante had known her personally, though at first (l. 59) he does not recognise her in her glorified beauty. So he had been slow, for a different reason, to recognise Forese (*Purg.* xxiii. 43).

To me 'twill grateful be if I may learn 40
 Somewhat about thy name and thine estate."
 Then she with laughing eyes did promptly turn,
 And said: "Our charity ne'er bars the gate
 To just desire, no more than this is done
 By That which wills that all it imitate. 45
 I in the world was known as virgin nun;
 And if on me thou turn thy mind and eye,
 Though now more fair, I shall not be unknown;
 But thou in me Piccarda wilt descry,
 Who, with the other blessed ones placed here, 50
 Am blest in sphere that moves most tardily.
 All our desires, that kindle bright and clear,
 In the joy perfect of the Spirit blest,
 Rejoice, as each His order's mark doth bear.
 And this same lot, which seems so low deprest, 55
 Is given to us because of our neglect,
 Which in some point made void our vows profest."
 And I: "In thy most wondrous fair aspect
 There shines I know not what of the divine,
 Transfiguring thee from what I recollect; 60
 Hence slow of memory was this mind of mine;
 But now what thou hast told me comes in aid,
 So that I trace thee clear as Latin line.
 But tell me, ye who here are happy made,
 Do ye desire to gain a loftier place, 65
 To see more, make more friends!" With many a shade

⁴⁴ The will of the blessed is one with the love of God, who wishes all to be conformed to His own likeness.

⁵¹ In the Ptolemaic system, the moon, as the lowest sphere, was also the slowest in its movements.

⁵⁶ The lot appears great to the pilgrim who has just entered Paradise, and yet is really the "least in the kingdom of heaven."

⁶⁴ The question was one which had almost from the first occupied the minds of Christian thinkers—Augustine (*C. D.* xxii. 30), Jerome (*adv. Jov.* ii.), Gregory of Nazianzus (*Orat.* xxvii. 8), and many others. On earth men naturally desire a greater happiness than they have, and are thus tempted to covetousness and envy. In Heaven, according to the teaching of Hugo of St. Victor, which Dante reproduces, there is no envy. The will of every blessed soul is in entire harmony with the Divine will, and finds in it all the bliss and peace of which it is capable (*De Sacr. Fid.* ii. xviii. 20; *Instit. Mon. de An.* iv. 15, in *Scart.*) So Aquinas (*Summ.* ii. 1. 19, 10). Comp. *Osan.* p. 168.

⁶⁶ The words point to the sources of joy: (1) the Beatific Vision; (2), the Communion of Saints, the joy itself increasing with the number of those with whom we are in fellowship. The phrase seems taken from *Luke* xvi. 9.

That near her stood, she first, with smiling face,
 Looked on me, then made answer with such joy,
 She seemed to glow with fire of love's first grace:
 "Brother, the might of Love gives such employ 70
 To our desires, that it can make us will
 Just what we have, unmixed with thirst's alloy.
 If we desired to pass on higher still,
 Then our desires would be at variance found
 With His who bids us here His mansions fill : 75
 This thou wilt see in these spheres hath no ground,
 If love be still the one thing needful here,
 And if its nature thou search well all round.
 So of our bliss this is cause formal, clear,
 That each upon God's will himself should stay, 80
 That so our wills may all one Will appear.
 So our whole realm rejoiceth in the way
 In which from stage to stage we upward mount,
 As doth the King whose Will doth our wills sway ;
 And in His Will of our peace is the fount ; 85
 That is the Sea whereto all beings move,
 Which as its works or Nature's works we count."
 Full clearly then her words to me did prove
 How everywhere in Heaven is Paradise,
 Though not on all alike God's grace pours love. 90
 But as it is when one food satisfies,
 And for another longs our appetite,
 One asks for this ; for that, "No, thanks," replies ;
 So I in act and word did her invite
 To tell me what that web was wherein she 95
 Plied not the shuttle to the end aright.
 "Her perfect life and merit great," to me
 She said, "insphere more high, a maid whose train
 Obedient, with her garb and veil agree,

⁸⁶ The sea of Divine love, to which all souls tend, as that of C. i. 113 had been of the life that pervades the universe.

⁸²⁻⁸⁷ I do not often stop to point out beauties which are better felt, but most readers will, I think, agree that these six lines are among the noblest in the whole poem.

⁹¹⁻⁹⁶ Of Dante's two questions, (1) whether the souls of the blessed were content each with its own portion ? (2) how it was that Piccarda had broken her vow, and what had been the effects of that broken vow on her state in heaven ? the first had been answered ; the second was yet to seek. Beatrice had not drawn the shuttle to the end of the web.

⁹⁶ The lady is St. Clara, of the family of Sciffi, at Assisi, &c. 1194. In 1212, under the

That they may watch or sleep, till death they gain, 100
 With that true Spouse who every vow will own,
 Which love to His good pleasure doth constrain.
 To follow her I did the world disown
 In girlhood's prime, and in her garb was drest,
 And vowed to take her order's path alone ; 105
 But men, with worst more conversant than best,
 Stole me from out the cloister's dear retreat :
 What my life then was is to God confest.
 And this bright form which here thy gaze doth meet
 Upon my right, and is illuminèd 110
 With all the light that makes our sphere complete,
 Hears what I say as though of her 'twere said.
 She was a Sister, and from her was torn
 The shadow of the blest veil round her head ;
 But when she backward to the world was borne, 115
 Against her will, against all custom right,
 For ever on her heart the veil was worn.
 Of great Costanza here is seen the light,
 Who to the second Suabian storm-blast bore
 The third, and last, of line of puissant might." 120
 So spake she, and began her strain to pour,
 "Ave Maria," parting, with that song,
 As sinks a stone by deep pool covered o'er.

guidance of St. Francis, she took vows of poverty and chastity in the Church of the Portiuncula, and became the head of a sisterhood conspicuous for its austerity and good works. She died in 1253, and was canonised by Alexander IV. in 1255. The Order, known as the "Poor Clares," spread through all the cities of Italy, and even into Germany and Bohemia.

¹⁰⁶ The men referred to are the two Donati brothers. Commentators have seen in the suppression of the name a delicate consideration on the poet's part for the feelings of his wife, but (?). He had not shrunk from writing hard things of them in *Purg.* xxiv. 82, 115.

¹⁰⁹ The outline is left to be filled up. Remorse, patient endurance, rigorous asceticism, prayers to depart and be at rest, may all be included in the pregnant words, as full of meaning as those which tell the story of La Pia (*Purg.* v. 133).

¹²⁰ The "other splendour" is Constance, daughter of Roger, king of Sicily, and granddaughter of Robert Guiscard. Her nephew, William the Good, who succeeded to the throne on the death of his father William the Bad, had no issue, and Constance was therefore presumptive heiress to the crown. Her brother William had placed her in the convent of St. Salvatore, as an alternative to putting her to death. Frederick Barbarossa, anxious to add Sicily to his dominions, brought about a marriage between Constance and his son Henry VI. Celestine III. gave her a dispensation from her vows, and at the age of thirty-one or thirty-seven (some chroniclers say fifty) she was married to Henry, who was then only twenty-one. After seven years of barrenness she gave birth, with circumstances of publicity and precaution which remind us of the confinement of Mary Beatrice of Modena, to a son, who, as the Emperor Frederick II., grew up to fulfil the prediction of the Abbot Joachim of Calabria, that he would be the torch to set all Italy on fire. That monarch Dante sorrowfully looks on as the last of his line, the last of the true emperors (*Barl.* p. 340; *Arriv.* p. 6; *Kington*, i. c. 1).

¹²² The form sinks, it will be remembered, as in a "sea of light," in the lustre of the "eternal pearl." Dante gazed on the vanishing form for a moment, but Beatrice was more to him than Piccarda or Constance, and he turned to her.

My gaze, which followed her for full as long
 As it was possible, when she was gone, 125
 Turned to the object of a love more strong,
 And all to Beatrice wandered on ;
 But she so flashed her lightnings on mine eye,
 My sight at first no strength to meet it won,
 And that caused me to question tardily. 130

CANTO IV.

The Poet's Questions—Do Souls return to the Stars?—Free-will and Force as Factors in Broken Vows.

BETWEEN two dainties, distant equally
 And tempting, a free man would waste away
 Ere he his teeth to either could apply ;
 So would a lamb stand that should chance to stray
 'Twixt two fierce wolves that each caused equal fear ; 5
 So would a dog between two does at bay.
 Wherefore my silence, as bewildered there
 I stood in doubt's suspense, I do not blame,
 Since "needs must" ruled it so, and praise I spare.
 Silent I stood, but my desire became 10
 In my looks painted, and thus my request
 More fervent was than clearest speech could frame.
 And Beatrice did as, at the hest
 Of Nabuchodonosor, Daniel,
 Taming the rage that filled the tyrant's breast ; 15
 And said : "I see how draweth thee the spell
 Now of this wish, now that, and so thy pain
 Is smothered, and thy care thou canst not tell.

¹ The proverb of "the ass between two bundles of hay" had its parallel in the teaching of Aquinas, who presents the problem of the position of the will with an absolute equilibrium of motives, as in the case here put, being logically or absolutely insoluble (*Summ.* i. 2. 13, 61). So, Dante says, it was with his two doubts. They vexed him equally, and so he held his peace and uttered neither.

¹⁸ See *Dan.* ii. Daniel told Nebuchadnezzar both his dream and its interpretation. Beatrice tells Dante his doubts and their solution. And the doubts are on one side moral, on the other physical. (1) If the vow of chastity was broken involuntarily, why did it involve any loss of blessedness? (2) Was the doctrine of Plato (*Tim.* p. 41, 8), that the souls of men came from the stars and returned to their several spheres, true, as the appearance of Piccarda and others in the moon seemed to indicate?

Thou arguest, 'If good-will yet remain,
 On what ground can another's violence 20
 Make less the measure of my merit's gain?'
 Also thou findest cause for doubting hence,
 That spirits seem unto the stars to go,
 As Plato's judgment deemed the soundest sense.
 These are the questions which thou seek'st to know 25
 In equal measure, therefore first will I
 Treat of the one that doth most venom show.
 The Seraph who most dwells in Deity,
 Moses and Samuel, and the blest St. John—
 Take which thou wilt, and pass not Mary by— 30
 Have in no other sphere of Heaven their throne
 Than those same spirits that thou looked'st on here,
 Nor years or more or less hath any one :
 But all make beautiful the primal sphere,
 And have their joyous life in varied guise, 35
 As more or less the Breath eterne is there.
 Here they appeared, not that in this sphere lies
 The lot assigned them, but in token true
 Of life celestial which doth lowest rise.
 This speech to thy mind bears proportion due, 40
 Since through the senses it doth apprehend
 What then is meet for intellect to view.
 Wherefore the Scripture thus doth condescend
 Unto your weakness, and both hands and feet
 Assigns to God, yet doth not so intend; 45
 And Holy Church in human figure meet
 Gabriel and Michael to you doth present,
 And him who made Tobias' cure complete.

²⁰ The second question is discussed first, as the more perilous. The Platonic thought, to which Dante may have been led through *Georg.* iv. 221-228, tended on the one hand to Pantheism, and on the other to localised and separate heavens, at variance with the Church's teaching as to the blessedness of the saints, and with Dante's own belief as to the Empyrean.

²⁵ The explanation given is that the souls of the highest Seraphim, of all Saints, of the Virgin Mother, are in the Empyrean Heaven, the abode of God, and that Piccarda and Constance are there also, though they and the souls in other spheres manifest themselves, according to their several merits, as those named have done in that of the Moon, which is the lowest of all. The interpretation which sees in l. 30 an exception in the Virgin's favour is at variance with Dante's central thought as well as with Catholic theology.

⁴⁰ What Dante had seen was therefore an accommodation to human infirmity, like that which is seen in the anthropomorphic language of the Bible and the artistic representations (was he thinking of Cimabue and Giotto?) of Gabriel, Michael, and Raphael (*Tos.* iii. 17, v. 4, 6, 21).

That which Timæus states in argument
 Is no wise like to that thou saw'st of late, 50
 Since what he says, 'twould seem, is his intent.
 He saith that for each soul its star doth wait,
 Deeming that it from that clime hither fell,
 When Nature gave it as a form innate.
 And yet, perchance, his words a meaning tell 55
 Beyond their sound, and so the thought may be
 Not such as men may laugh and mock at well.
 If he but means in these same orbs to see
 The honour of their influence, or their blame,
 Perchance his bow hath hit some verity. 60
 Ill understood, this doctrine was the same
 As that which well-nigh drew the world, or Jove
 Or Mars or Mercury as gods to name.
 The other doubt which doth thy spirit move
 Hath less of poison, since no evil lust 65
 Therefrom could lead thy steps from me to rove.
 That this our Justice should appear unjust
 In mortal eyes is but an argument,
 Not for vile heresy, but faith and trust.
 But since to this truth and its high intent 70
 Thy understanding well may penetrate,
 I, as thou seekest, will thy soul content.

⁴⁹ Dante may have known the *Timæus* through the Latin translation and commentary of Chalcidius, which was well known in the thirteenth century (*Wille*), or from Cicero's treatise of the same name. Comp. Aquin. c. *Genes*, ii. 47, 48; *Conv.* iv. 21.

⁵⁵ The habit of finding manifold meanings passed naturally from Scripture to other books, and Dante apologetically suggests that Plato may have meant only to refer to the stellar influences, in which Dante recognised the determining elements, not of man's will, but of his qualities and tendencies. The words of Plato (*Tim.* p. 40 d.), if Dante had read them, would have suggested such a thought (*Butl.*)

⁶⁵ The readings vary, "*nominar*" in the sense of invoking, *numerar* = to reckon, and *numinar* = to deify. The common adjectives "jovial," "mercurial," "martial," bear witness to what was an almost universal belief. Butler compares Augustine's "*nominibus nominaverunt*" (*C. D.* vii. 15).

⁶⁴ The other doubt is treated as one which did not involve a departure from a true theology. If there was a seeming injustice in the divine government, with which Beatrice, as the symbol of Wisdom, identifies herself (*Prov.* viii.), that ought to strengthen, not to weaken, faith; for that, when the finite contemplates the infinite, is precisely what analogy would lead us to expect, and the very doubt in a single instance implies faith in the general justice of God, and not the privacy of the heretic. This seems, on the whole, the best explanation, though it must be admitted that it applies the word "argument" in two slightly different senses. The subjective meaning "evidence of faith" would be tenable enough in itself, but then one does not see why the doubt should be said to have any element of evil in it. Comp. Aquin. c. *Gen.* *Provem.* c. 9; Anselm. *De Incarn.* c. 11; *Cur Deus*, i. 2.

If 'tis constraint when he who bears his fate
 No wise allows what twists his deeds awry,
 Then doth it not these spirits liberate : 75
 For will, unless it wills, can never die,
 But works as Nature worketh in the fire,
 Though force a thousand times to twist it try.
 If more or less it yieldeth to desire,
 It seconds the constraint ; and thus did they, 80
 Being able to the cloister to retire.
 If then their will had trod the perfect way,
 As Laurence did, upon the hot bars laid,
 Or Mucius, stern to make his hand obey,
 Back on that road it would have them conveyed 85
 Whence they were dragged, as soon as they were free :
 But all too rare is will so firmly stayed.
 And by these words, if they are stored by thee,
 As thou should'st store them, is the objection met
 Which else would oft have caused perplexity. 90
 But now another passage hard is set
 Before thine eyes, whence of thyself alone,
 Thou could'st not 'scape ere thou should'st weary get.
 I, as a certain truth, to thee have shown
 That blessed spirits know not how to lie, 95
 Since to the First Truth they are nearer grown ;
 And so Piccarda this might certify,
 That Constance kept her fondness for the veil,
 Seeming to speak another thing than I.
 And often, brother mine—so runs the tale— 100
 We, to flee danger, 'gainst our better will,
 Do that which makes us from our duty fail,

⁷⁵ The solution of the difficulty is an echo of Aquinas (*Summa*. P. ii. 2. 85, 1). In the constraint which excuses altogether there is no co-operation of the will. Piccarda and those like her had consented, though against their will. They had not, like martyrs, "resisted unto blood." Nothing constrains fire to tend downward ; nothing should so constrain the soul. Those who had been torn from convents might have returned to them when they had an opportunity.

⁸⁰ The story of St. Laurence and his martyrdom on his fiery bed of steel and that of Mucius Scaevola (to which Dante refers also in *Conv.* iv. 5 ; *Mon.* ii. 5) are examples of the will that does not yield one jot or tittle.

⁸⁵ Yet another difficulty. Piccarda had said that Constance never ceased to love her life as nun. How could that be true when she did not return to it ?

⁹⁰ Another casuistic distinction solves the problem. Men will to act against their will, *i.e.*, against their inclination, to avoid a danger. When they so act against conscience they cannot plead constraint.

E'en as Alcmæon did his mother kill,
 Obedient to his father's urgent prayer,
 And in his impious deed was pious still. 105
 And at this point I wish thee to compare
 How force with will doth blend itself, and make
 The sin to be of all excuses bare.
 Absolute will consents not law to break ;
 But it consents, so far as it feels fear, 110
 If it refrain, for greater danger's sake.
 So when Piccarda's utterance met thine ear,
 She spoke of that will absolute, and I
 Of the other ; so we both the truth speak here."
 With such calm course the holy stream flowed by, 115
 Which sprang from fount whence flows each truth divine,
 And both my cravings thus did satisfy.
 "O loved of Love supreme, O goddess mine,"
 I said, approaching, "whose words o'er me flow,
 And to a warmer, fuller life incline ; 120
 Not all my feeling to such depth can go
 As to requite thee fully, grace for grace :
 Let Him do that who all doth see and know.
 I see that nought can fill the mind's vast space,
 Unless Truth's light dwell there as denizen, 125
 Beyond which nothing true can find a place.
 In that it rests, like wild beast in its den,
 When it attains it ; and it can attain,
 Else frustrate would be all desires of men.

108 For the story of Alcmæon, see *H.* xx. 34 n. ; *Purg.* xii. 50 n. The antithesis in l. 105 reminds us of *H.* xx. 28 ; both being echoes of *Met.* ix. 408 : "*Facto pius et sceleratus eodem.*"

113 The "absolute will"—will not constrained—of Constance was for the convent life ; her mixed will, consenting to fear as well as force, led her to remain an Empress. Here again we have Aquinas (*Summ.* i. 2. 6, 6). Comp. throughout the discussion, Hooker, *E. P.* l. 7.

116 Beatrice is the river ; God the source of truth, from which the river flows.

118 The words rise almost to the level of an apotheosis ; but Beatrice, we must remember, has become the representation of Divine Wisdom, and the language has its parallel in that of Hooker (*E. P.* i. *ad fin.*) when he says of Law that "her seat is the bosom of God, her voice the harmony of the world ;" that "all things do her homage as the mother of their peace and joy."

127 The comparison has its parallel in *Ps.* xlii. 1. The "hart desiring the water-brooks" is a parable of the soul's thirst for God ; the rest of the hart in its lair, free from danger, sets forth the peace of the intellect when it rests, after its restless wanderings, vexed and driven by the dogs of doubt, in the possession of assured truth.

129 Mediæval thought assumed that the existence of a desire implied that of the desired object. Starting from the belief in a creative Will, wise, mighty, loving, it would not admit that God had given men desires only that they might be frustrated. "Man seeks for truth,

And thence springs, like a scion, doubt again 180
 Hard by Truth's stem, and such is Nature's law,
 Which, height on height, leads upward from the plain.
 This gives assurance, this my mind doth draw
 With reverence, Lady, yet to ask of thee
 Of other truth which as obscure I saw. 185
 I wish to know if man, for vows that he
 Breaks, may with other good deeds satisfy,
 That in your scales they not too light may be."
 And Beatrice looked on me with eye
 So full of glow of love and so divine, 140
 That, my strength failing, then my back turned I,
 And, almost fainting, did mine eyes incline.

CANTO V.

The Doctrine of Dispensations—The Second Heaven, of Mercury—The Love of Fame.

"IF I so glowing seem in heat of love,
 Beyond the fashion that on earth is known,
 So that too much for thine eyes' strength I prove,

therefore truth is to be found," seemed to them to be a natural, almost an axiomatic, inference (*Sansone*. i. 12).

¹³⁹ The thought is that of one who had known the doubts from which even the thirteenth century was not exempt. To him those doubts are not like the canker that eats into the heart of the tree, or the ivy which sucks out its vigour. They, the kind of doubts of which we have here a sample, were the suckers that proved the tree's vitality, though they needed to be pruned.

¹⁴⁰ One such question meets us, that of the commutation of vows (*Lev.* xxvii.), and the general principle of the obligation of promises seemed against it. Yet the Church claimed the power to dispense from vows, and this included the right to commute. Was either act legitimate, and if so, on what conditions?

¹⁴¹ A difference of reading, "*diedi*" or "*diede*," and of punctuation, gives two alternative renderings—

"My strength being overpowered, fled away;"

or

"I, my strength overpowered, turned away from her."

Italian commentators gravely discuss whether the act thus described would have been that of a gentleman.

¹ The visible beauty of Beatrice had even in the *V. N. c.* 21, 26, overwhelmed the pilgrim, as in the last lines of *C. iv.*, and been as a foretaste of Paradise. He cannot separate that beauty from the most spiritual conception of Paradise, that it is the joy of finding intellectual truth. In *Cowp.* iii. 15 we have poetry turned into prose, and the dissolving views stereotyped in the formula that Philosophy is a "fair lady," and that her eyes are "demonstrations." What he now hears is that the beauty which so enchants him grows, and will grow, brighter as they advance to higher regions of contemplation. The "perfect vision" is that with

Marvel thou not ; from perfect sight alone
 Doth this proceed, which, as it sees aright, 5
 To the good seen still moves its footsteps on.
 Well I perceive how that Eternal Light
 Already shines on thine intelligence,
 Which, when 'tis seen, makes love's flame ever bright ;
 And if aught else thy love seduces thence, 10
 'Tis nothing but its vestige which is tracked,
 Ill understood, that penetrates the sense.
 Thou seek'st to know if thou canst give in act
 For broken vow some service, which, when paid,
 Should keep the soul from claim of law intact." 15
 So Beatrice this Canto's opening made,
 And, as a man who tells his tale apace,
 Her holy argument full open laid.
 "The greatest gift that God of His free grace
 Gave at creation, and most near in kind 20
 To His own goodness, foremost in the race
 For praise, is freedom of the will and mind,
 Which to all living things intelligent,
 And those alone, hath been and is assigned.
 Now thou wilt see in this high argument 25
 How high the worth of vows, if made but so
 That God consenteth unto thy consent ;
 For in this bond 'twixt God and man we show
 We of this treasure make a sacrifice,
 Such as I tell ; its own act bids it go. 30
 What then can come as compensating price ?
 Think'st thou to use well things thus consecrate,
 'Twere to do good with wealth obtained by vica.

which Beatrice sees truth. Aquinas (*Summ.* i. 60, 2) and Aristotle (*E. N.* ix. 12) are again paraphrased. The lovers of physical beauty find their chief joy in gazing on it ; so the spiritual beauty of truth presents in varying degrees the vision which is joy.

¹⁰ The doubts or errors which are in the mind of the seeker after truth do not spring from the pravity of will, which is the essence of heresy (C. iv. 65), but from the imperfect apprehension of partial truth, which leads it to take the part for the whole. There is a truth, that is, underlying the error (*Summ.* i. 60, 2).

¹⁹ The discussion begins by postulating freedom of will as the highest gift bestowed on intellectual creatures, men and angels, and on them alone. In making a vow, man, fettering his freedom by a self-imposed restraint, offers to God the highest sacrifice within his reach. To employ what has been thus consecrated even for pious uses is to rob God in order to give alms. This appears self-evident, but then comes in the Church's power of dispensation, which seems to set aside that axiom.

Now art thou certain of that problem great :
 But since the Church doth oft dispense with it,— 35
 Which seems against the truth I showed of late,—
 'Tis meet that thou awhile at table sit,
 Because the strong meat thou hast ta'en doth call
 For aid, thy stomach's feeble power to fit.
 Open thy mind to that which I let fall, 40
 And fix it there, for knowledge is not found
 In having heard, without retaining all.
 Two things there are as with the essence bound
 Of that same sacrifice ; the one is that
 Of which 'tis made, and one the compact's ground. 45
 This last is never cancelled save by what
 Fulfils it, and of this enough I said,
 In words that pointed specially thereat.
 So on the Hebrews it was binding made
 To offer, though the things they offered might 50
 Be changed, and this should in thy mind be weighed.
 The other, which as matter meets thy sight,
 May well be such that promise doth not fail,
 If it for somewhat else be changed aright.
 But no one may to shift the load prevail 55
 By his own choice, unless the keys shall turn,
 One golden and the other silver pale ;
 And every change to count as foolish learn,
 Unless the old in that which takes its place
 As four in six included thou discern. 60
 Therefore, whatever hath such weight of grace
 That it doth every counterpoise outweigh,
 No other spending ever can replace.

³⁷ We note the recurrence of the leading thought of *Conv.* i. 1, that truth is the "angels' food," which the teacher offers to his scholars. *Comp.* 1 *Cor.* ii. 14; *Heb.* v. 14.

³⁸ The solution of the problem begins with a *distinguo*. The vow includes two elements, the material thing promised and the surrender of will. The latter cannot be dispensed with, the former may be commuted. Dante shows himself a more rigorous, or at least a more exact, casuist than Aquinas, who allows entire dispensation for the sake of a greater good (*Summ.* P. ii. 2, 88). So if an Israelite made a vow, he was bound, as a rule, to perform his vow in the letter, the exception being that the first-born of man might be redeemed, *i.e.*, commuted for, by the first-born of beast (*Lev.* xxvii. 9, 10, 28-33).

³⁹ The keys, as in *Purg.* ix. 117, are the symbols of Church wisdom and authority, without which no man may venture on the commutation to which interest or pleasure may tempt him. And to guard against the temptation the further rule is laid down that the substituted gift must be half as much again in value as the original. The law of *Lev.* xxvii. prescribed one-fifth in the addition.

⁴⁰ The general principle excludes commutation in the case of vows of chastity, and *à for-*

Let mortals then no vows in jesting say ;
 Be faithful, nor to act so rashly stirred, 65
 As Jephthah was his ' first chance ' vow to pay,
 Who more becomingly had said, ' I've erred,'
 Than to do worse in bondage to such ties.
 Nor less the blame the Greeks' great duke incurred,
 Whence wept Iphigenia her fair eyes, 70
 And made tears flow alike from fool and sage,
 When they heard tell of such a sacrifice.
 O Christians ! with less haste yourselves engage ;
 Be not like feather blown by every wind,
 Nor think all streams can cleanse guilt's heritage. 75
 Ye have the Scriptures Old and New in mind,
 The Pastor of the Church to be your guide ;
 Enough for your salvation there ye'll find.
 If evil lust aught else to you hath cried,
 Be ye as men, and not like silly beasts, 80
 Lest e'en the Jews among you you deride.
 Be not like lamb that leaves its mother's breasts,
 And, in its wanton and unwise delight,
 At its own pleasure, with itself contests."
 So Beatrice spake, and so I write, 85
 And then again she turned with yearning keen,
 There where the world shows most of life and light.

tiori dispensation. Nothing can take the place of the sacrifice which the vow implies. So *Summ.* ii. 2. 78, 11.

64 Dante follows Aquinas (1) in assuming that Jephthah slew his daughter ; (2) in condemning the act (*Summ.* ii. 2. 88, 2). The parallel of Iphigenia may have been read either in *Æn.* ii. 116 or *Boeth.* iv. 7. There is no trace of his having known Lucretius (i. 85).

73 The counsels of Wisdom take a wider range, and lay down the position that Scripture interpreted by the Church are the Christian's *regula fidei*. Line 75 seems like an echo of "one baptism for the remission of sins."

80 An echo from *Ps.* xxxii. 9 ; 2 *Pet.* ii. 12. Had Dante come in contact with Jews, Immanuel of Rome, or others (vol. i. lxxvi.), who sneered at the indulgent laxity with which Christians observed their vows?

87 (1) The East ; (2) the Sun seen on the Equator ; (3) the Empyrean Heaven, have all found advocates. I incline to (1). The whole discussion, which thus ends, seems to us at first to belong to the dreariest regions of casuistry, with no element either of life or poetry. But what if between the lines we were to find an element of personality as intense and living as that which meets us in *Purg.* xxxi. xxxii., of principles as important as those underlying the discussions of C. ii. ? What if Dante found in his own life a parallel to that of Piccarda ? What if, behind the memory of Beatrice and the cord of the Tertiary Order, not in itself binding to celibacy, there had been an inward purpose, half-formulated into a vow, of which the celibate life would have been the natural outcome, and his friends had pressed marriage upon him, marriage with a Donati, as Corso Donati had pressed it on Piccarda ? They had urged the pleas of health, wealth, worldly prosperity, and he had yielded, without "the gold or silver key," without consulting his spiritual director, to his own great loss. He had consented against his will, and what his friends had thought would be a safeguard against sensual temptation proved to be no safeguard at all, rather in the

Her silence, and the change in look and mien,
 Restraint to my desire administ'ed,
 Which still new questions in advance had seen ; 90
 And as an arrow hits, ere yet hath fled
 The bow-string's trembling, that whereto 'twas sent,
 So to the Second Realm our way we sped.
 And there my Lady saw I so content,
 As she within that light of Heaven passed on, 95
 That brighter glory she the planet lent.
 And if the star, thus changed, in smiling shone,
 What should I do, of nature frail the heir,
 Who in all ways as changeable am known !
 As, in a fishpond which is calm and clear, 100
 The fishes draw to what may on it light,
 In way that shows they count on new food there,
 So I saw more than thousand splendours bright
 Draw nigh towards us, and from each was heard,
 "Lo ! this is she who shall increase Love's might." 105
 And as each one of them our presence neared,
 The shade was seen as full of blessedness,
 By the clear light that streaming forth appeared.
 Bethink thee, Reader, how it would distress
 Thy mind, how eager thou would'st be to know, 110
 If the tale thus begun should not progress ;
 And thou wilt see within thyself that so
 I sought to hear them tell me of their state,
 As to mine eyes their forms themselves did show.

absence of any true ideal of marriage even partially realised, left him more exposed to it. This, at least, is what I find in the discussion. If it is only a hypothesis, it has at least the merit of including all phenomena, explaining what has hitherto been left unexplained.

⁹² In a moment, as in a world beyond human measurement, the travellers pass from the sphere of the moon to that of Mercury. And Beatrice grows brighter, and so does the planet, and so does Dante himself.

⁹³ We note the curious self-analysis of the line which describes the true poetic temperament.

¹⁰⁰ It would be worth while to find out when gold and silver fish (*Cyprinus auratus*) were first introduced into the fish-ponds of Italy. If Dante had seen them in their brightness, they might well seem to him a parable of the heavenly splendours, almost like the "topazes" and "rubies" of C. xxx. 66, 76. They are said to have been introduced into England in 1691, but I do not know when they first found their way from China to Europe.

¹⁰⁵ The line expresses the idea of the Communion of Saints. As the angels rejoice "over one sinner that repenteth" (*Luke* xv. 10), so the spirits of the blest over one (we note that the verb is in the singular) who comes a fresh object of their love. They seek therefore to know who and what manner of man the new comer is. Dante, in his turn, and in the same spirit, seeks to know who has thus spoken to him.

"O born to good, to whom the favour great 115
 Is given to see the eternal Triumph's throne,
 Ere thou thy warfare's close canst celebrate,
 We by the light that o'er all Heaven is thrown
 Are kindled, wherefore if 'tis thy desire
 To know us, all shall at thy will be shown." 120
 Such words from lips of one of that blest choir
 I heard, and "Speak, speak," Beatrice said;
 "Trust them as gods; let nothing doubt inspire."
 "I see full well how thou a nest hast made
 In thine own light, and draw'st it from thine eyes, 125
 For lo! they flashed as thy smiles on me played;
 But thee I know not, nor why for thee lies,
 O worthiest soul, thy home within the sphere,
 Veiled from men's eyes by rays that elsewhere rise."
 So spake I straight towards that radiance clear 130
 Who first had spoken, and so it became
 More lucid than at first it did appear:
 And like the sun, that in excess of flame
 Hides himself, when the heat hath scatterèd
 The vapours dense that did his glory maim, 135
 So in their joy o'er-great had vanishèd
 In their own light those holy lineaments;
 And hidden, hidden, thus the answer said,
 Which the next Canto in its song presents.

¹²⁵ The phrase explains the use of "goddess" in C. iv. 118. Was *John* x. 34, 35, in Dante's thoughts.

¹²⁹ Mercury, as nearest to the sun, is for the most part invisible.

¹³³ We are reminded of Milton's "dark with excess of light." The figure of the speaker withdraws into a veil of greater brightness.

CANTO VI.

Justinian—The Flight of the Roman Eagle—The Pilgrim Romeo.

“WHEN Constantine had turned the eagle’s flight,
 Against Heaven’s order, heretofore obeyed,
 Following Lavinia’s old heroic knight,
 That bird of God two hundred years had made,
 And more, in Europe’s furthest coast its nest, 5
 Near to the hills where first it left the shade ;
 And ’neath the shadow of its wide wings blest,
 From hand to hand the world’s dominion ran,
 And changing thus, at last with me did rest.
 Cæsar I was, and am Justinian, 10
 Who, feeling will of primal Love, was bent
 To make laws free from vain and cumbrous plan.
 And ere I was upon that work intent,
 In Christ one nature only, and no more,
 I held, and was with that my faith content. 15
 But the blest Agapêtus, he who bore
 The office of chief shepherd, to my view
 Brought by his words the true faith’s better lore.
 Him I believed, and now, with judgment new,
 Discern what he then taught, as thou canst see, 20
 In contradiction marshalled, false and true.

¹ It is not with a sense of relief that we pass from the physical and moral problems of C. ii.-v. to the splendid epitome of Roman history with which the Canto opens. The speaker (l. 10) is Justinian.

² The progress of empire had been from East to West. Constantine turned it back towards its source.

³ The “ancient” hero is of course Æneas, as the founder of the Roman power (*Mon.* ii. 3).

⁴ Two hundred years are reckoned from Constantine (326) to Justinian (527). The border-land of Europe is Constantinople, near the plain of Troy, from which Æneas had started.

⁵ The great task was that of consolidating the confused mass of edicts and opinions into a great code. The words are almost a quotation from the Emperor’s Preface to the *Institutes*: “*Opus desperatum celesti favore jam adimplevimus*” (*Bull.*) The chaff was sifted from the wheat, and the result was found in the *Codex*, the *Pandects*, and the *Novellæ* which bear Justinian’s name.

¹⁵ Strictly speaking, it was the Empress Theodora who was jealous for the Eutychian or Monophysite dogma, Justinian only so far as he was under her influence. She had insisted on the appointment of the Monophysite Anthimus as Patriarch of Constantinople, and when Agapetus, Bishop of Rome, arrived there, the Emperor insisted on the Pope’s communicating with him. He rebuked the Emperor for his Eutychian leanings, obtained his signature to an orthodox confession, and succeeded in obtaining the deposition of Anthimus. The story is told fully in Paul, *Diac.* xvii., but Dante may have learnt it from Latini’s *Treſor*, ii. 25.

²¹ The first axiom of dialectic was that of two contradictory propositions one must be true

Soon as my steps did with the Church agree,
 It was God's will through grace my mind to thrust
 To my high task, and this was all to me.
 To Belisarius I the arms did trust, 25
 With whom was joined such aid from hand of Heaven
 That it was token that my rest was just.
 To thy first question thus is answer given ;
 But now, such is that very question's state,
 That I to touch on other grounds am driven. 30
 That thou may'st see with argument of weight
 How men contend against the sacred sign,
 Who or oppose it or appropriate,
 See thou what virtue great hath made it shine,
 Worthy of homage ; and I there begin 35
 When Pallas died to found its kingly line.
 Thou know'st how it in Alba home did win,
 And there for more than centuries three abode,
 Till champions three met three in conflict's din.
 Thou know'st how 'twas on those seven kings bestowed, 40
 From Sabine rape to chaste Lucretia's pain,
 While it o'er neighbouring nations conquering strode.
 Thou know'st what great achievements it did gain,
 By Romans famed 'gainst Brennus, Pyrrhus borne,
 And other chieftains in confederate train. 45

and the other false. The dogma of the two natures in one person now seemed to Justinian as axiomatic. The symbolism of the Gryphon indicates the stress which Dante himself laid on the dogma (*Purg.* xxix. 108). Comp. also *C.* xxxiii. 130.

²⁵ As a matter of history, the work of codifying was begun before the visit of Agapetus.

³⁰ The victories of Belisarius were accepted as a sign that the Emperor need not lead his armies himself, but might give himself to the arts of peace. Did Dante know of the way in which Belisarius was rewarded? Probably not. Villani (ii. 6) tells the story as if he had continued in the Emperor's favour till his death.

³¹ The lines that follow sum up the argument of the *De Monarchia*. The eagle was the sacred symbol of the ideal Empire. Ghibellines who used it for their selfish ends, and Guelphs who opposed it, were alike impious (l. 103). The footsteps of the Divine order are traced in its history. (Comp. *Mon.* ii. 10; *Conv.* iv. 5.)

³⁶ Pallas, the son of Evander, king of Latium, died as the ally of Æneas, fighting against Turnus (*Æn.* viii.-x.) Æneas, from Dante's standpoint, became his heir.

³⁷ The received dates give 1184 B.C. for capture of Troy, 753 for foundation of Rome. Line 39 refers to the combat of the Horatii and Curiatii (*Liv.* i. 24), which resulted in the transfer of power from Alba Longa to Rome. The rape of the Sabine women and that of Lucretia are taken as the limits of the period of the kings during which Rome was extending her conquests.

⁴⁵ The next salient points are (1) the capture of Rome by the Gauls, followed by their defeat by Camillus, B.C. 389 (*Conv.* iv. 5); (2) the defeat of Pyrrhus (B.C. 275), whom we have met in *H.* xii. 135. Then, selecting the chief heroes, he names T. Manlius, Quinctius Cincinnatus (we note that he explains the name), the Decii, who fought against the

And then Torquatus, Quinctius, named in scorn
 From locks unkempt, the Decii, Fabii too,
 Won fame to which my myrrh I gladly burn.
 It did the pride of Arabs fierce subdue,
 Who crossed, behind the steps of Hannibal, 50
 The Alps, whence thou, O Po, dost glide to view.
 Young heroes to their triumph did it call,
 Scipio and Pompey, and on that same hill
 Where thou wast born, full fiercely did it fall.
 Then at the time wherein all Heaven's high will 55
 Would bring the world beneath its law serene,
 At Rome's behest 'twas borne by Cæsar's skill:
 And what it did from Varo to the Rhene,
 By Isar, Arar, Seine, and every vale
 That pays its tribute to the Rhone, was seen. 60
 But what it did when, mighty to prevail,
 It left Ravenna, leapt the Rubicon,
 Nor tongue nor pen could tell the wondrous tale.
 Then towards Spain it wheeled its legions on;
 Then towards Durazzo, and Pharsalia smote, 65
 So that hot Nile felt sharp pangs through it run.

Samnites, the great Fabian house which found its chief representatives in Maximus and the "Cunctator."

⁴⁹ Commentators have perplexed themselves as to why Dante spoke of the Carthaginians as Arabs, but it was quite after his manner to use modern names for the ancient inhabitants of the same region. So Virgil is a Lombard (*H.* i. 68) and the Gauls are "Franceschi" (*Conv.* iv. 5). The people of North Africa were Arabs in the thirteenth century, and that was enough.

⁵² Scipio seems to have been a special hero of Dante's. So in *Conv.* iv. 5 he appears as "quello benedetto giovane." The "hill" is Fiesole, which was said to have been destroyed by Cæsar Pompeius, and again by Julius Cæsar (*Vill.* i. 36, 37).

⁵⁵ The peace which was wrought by the victories of Cæsar and Augustus, and of which the closing of the Temple of Janus at the time of the birth of Christ (l. 82) was the outward token, was a favourite topic with Dante, as indicating the Divine purpose working in history (*Conv.* iv. 5; *Mon.* i. 16).

⁵⁸⁻⁵⁹ The Var, a river on the west of Nice, is named as the boundary between Gallia Transalpina and Cisalpina; Isara = the Isère, which flows into the Rhone at Valence; Era = Saône, falling into the same river at Lyons; Senna = Seine. The description finds a parallel in *Luc.* i. 399-446. "Rhene" finds a precedent in Milton, *P. L.*, i. 352.

⁶¹ Cæsar halted at Ravenna before he crossed the Rubicon (*Suet. Jul. C.* 30), and Dante, who had probably been staying at Ravenna (comp. *Purg.* xxviii. 20) before he wrote this *Canto*, naturally dwelt on the ancient glories of the city.

⁶⁴ Cæsar, and not Pompeius, is recognised as the true champion of the Roman eagle. The lines epitomise his conquests over Pompeius' legates in Spain, the siege of Durazzo (= Dyrrachium = Epidamnus) by the Pompeian forces, the great victory of Pharsalia. Here again Dante follows Lucan (vii., viii.) The readings in l. 66 vary *al* and *il*. The general meaning is clear enough. The effects of the victory of Pharsalia were felt even on the banks of the Nile, where Pompeius was slain by Ptolemy (*Luc.* viii.)

Antandros then and Simois remote,
 Its birthplace, it resaw, where Hector lay ;
 Thence with ill speed for Ptolemy did float,
 And so to Juba flashing made its way ; 70
 And then it wheeled itself towards your west,
 Where Pompey's clarion notes were heard to play.
 For what he wrought, next bearer of its crest,
 Brutus and Cassius howl in nether Hell ;
 Perugia, Modena, sorely it distrest. 75
 Still Cleopatra's tears of anguish well,
 Whom, fleeing from it, by the serpent's bite
 A death dark, sudden, terrible befell.
 To the Red Sea with him it winged its flight ;
 With him the world it settled in such peace 80
 That Janus' temple closed its gates of might.
 But what the sign, of which to tell doth please,
 Had done before and was about to do
 For the world's kingdom, ruled by its decrees,
 Scant and obscure becomes to outward view, 85
 When the third Cæsar's hands the sceptre swayed,
 If eye be clear and our affection true.
 For then the living Justice, which hath made
 Me wise, gave it, through him of whom I speak,
 The boast of vengeance to His anger paid. 90

⁶⁷ After Pharsalia Cæsar led his troops to Antandros, a city in Phrygia ; to Simois, the famed river of Troy, and so the eagle once more saw the nest from which it had flown, the cradle of the Roman people, the tomb of Hector (*Æn.* i. 99, v. 371). Hence the Dictator led his forces to the conquest of Egypt ; then against Juba, king of Numidia, who had all along been a strong Pompeian ; then finally to Spain, where the war ended by the defeat of Labienus and the sons of Pompeius.

⁷³ The "next standard-bearer" is Augustus. It is characteristic that the crime for which Brutus and Cassius are in Hell (*H.* xxxiv. 65-67) is not so much the murder of Julius as their resistance to his successor as the divinely-appointed Emperor.

⁷⁵ Augustus defeated Marcus Antonius near Modena, and afterwards besieged Perugia, where Lucius Antonius had taken refuge with Fulvia.

⁷⁶ The battle of Actium is not named, but is implied in the death of Cleopatra, which followed on it. For the "Red Sea" comp. *Æn.* viii. 686.

⁸² All earthly conquests, however, fell into insignificance as compared with the great glory given to the Empire under Tiberius, as the third Cæsar. The Christ had been born under Augustus, but it was given to his successor that the great redemption should be wrought out in his time, and through the instrumentality of the Empire (*Mon.* i. 13). The death of Christ satisfied the righteous wrath of God, and that death was the act of a Roman governor. For that act Dante, however, clearly held that the Jews, and not Pilate, were responsible, and so Titus in his turn had the glory of being a minister of the Divine vengeance.

At my rejoinder marvel now, and seek :—
 Later it sped with Titus, vengeance right
 Upon that vengeance of old sin to wreak.
 And when the Lombard tooth began to bite
 The Holy Church, beneath its sheltering wing 85
 Came Charlemagne to help with conquering might.
 Now canst thou judge what wrong and woe they bring
 Whom I but now to thee as guilty named,
 And see how from them all your mischiefs spring,†
 These 'gainst the public standard have proclaimed 100
 The golden lilies : those make it their own ;
 Uncertain is it who should most be blamed.
 Let then the Ghibellines make known, make known,
 Their arts 'neath other standard ; this is slow
 To join with those who justice will dethrone. 105
 And let not this new Charles aim at it blow,
 With those his Guelphs, but hold those claws in fear
 Which of its hide stripped nobler lion-foe.
 Full oft have children shed a bitter tear
 For sins of sires, and never let men deem 110
 That God those lilies for His arms shall bear.
 This star, though small, as well-adorned doth beam,
 Through spirits good that have been seen in act,
 That men may them as great and good esteem.

† Butler ingeniously suggests that the term "reply" is used in its technical sense as the answer of the plaintiff in a suit to the "exceptions" taken by the defendant.

84 The sketch passes rapidly over the decline and fall of the first Empire to its revival under Charlemagne, in which Dante saw the Divine sanction given to the perpetuity of the Empire, and then passes to an impartial condemnation of the factions by which Italy was in his own time divided. The idealist has formed a party by himself (comp. l. 33 : C. xvii. 69), and condemns alike those who bore the yellow *flour-de-lys* of France, borne by the house of Anjou at Naples (Charles II. was king in 1300), as the head of the Guelphs, and the Ghibellines who turned the sacred eagle into a badge of faction. We note the agreement of tone with Henry VII.'s proclamation on entering Italy (l. p. cl.)

105 The "new Charles" has been identified by Witte as possibly Charles of Valois, but at the assumed date of the vision he had not appeared in Italy, and when Dante wrote the *Paradiso* had vanished from the scene. I adhere, therefore, with most commentators, in applying the words to Charles II. of Naples, who was king in 1300, though the warning was probably meant for his successor, Robert, who succeeded to the throne in 1309.

106 The words may refer to any of the kings who had been conquered by the Roman eagle, Pyrrhus, Jugurtha, Ptolemy, and the like.

112 With this warning the history ends, and Justinian proceeds to tell how Mercury, the smallest of the planets (*Conv.* ii. 14), is assigned to the souls that have sought true fame on earth. They ought to have sought something higher, and therefore they are in the lowest sphere but one ; but they accept it as all that they deserve, and find their joy in the perfect justice of the Divine award.

And when desires have settled in that tract, 115
 And from the true path turn aside, the ray
 Of true Love needs must show less life in act.
 But in the due proportion of our pay
 To merits is large measure of our joy,
 Since nor o'er-prized nor under-paid are they. 120
 The living Justice doth our thoughts employ
 So sweetly that they ne'er aside decline,
 To work for others evil or annoy.
 As divers tones in music sweet combine,
 So in our life the several steps uprise, 125
 And in these spheres make harmony divine.
 And so within this fair pearl of the skies
 Shines the bright sheen of Romeo, he whose name
 And work, though great and fair, gained meagre prize;
 But those Provençals who against him came 130
 Have found no cause for mirth; so he fares ill
 Who counts as loss another's deeds of fame.
 Four daughters, destined each a throne to fill,
 Had Raimond Berengario, and 'twas he,
 Romeo, the low-born stranger, worked his will; 135
 Yet was he led by envious calumny
 To call to strict account this man so just,
 That he for ten gave twelve as usury.
 So, old and poor, he parted from his trust;
 And if the world but knew the heart he bore, 140
 Begging, for very life's sake, crust on crust,
 Who praise him much would praise him then yet more."

¹²⁷ For "pearl" see C. ii. 34. The history of Romeo (the word, at first used for one who had been on a pilgrimage to Rome, seems to have passed into a proper name—the Romeo of Verona was probably a contemporary) seems to have been chosen by Dante as a typical instance of the love of fame at the opposite pole to that of Justinian. As told in *Vill.* vi. 90, the story runs thus:—Raimond Berlinghieri (or Berenger) was Count of Provence. A pilgrim came to his court from the shrine of St. James of Compostella, and rose into high favour with the Count. By his counsels the four daughters of Raimond, who had no sons, were married, Margaret to Louis IX. of France (*Purg.* xx. 61), Eleanor to Henry III. of England, Sanxia to Richard, Earl of Cornwall (brother of Henry III.), Beatrice to Charles of Anjou. The barons of Provence, envious of his influence, accused him of wasting his lord's goods. Romeo cleared himself of the charge, gave an account of his stewardship, and then left the court, as he had come to it, on his mule and with his pilgrim's staff. Later historians (*Scart.*) affirm that the latter part of the story has no foundation, and that Romeo died in Provence in 1250, but Dante may well have believed what Villani writes. One can fancy how the magnanimity of the man who thus chose exile and poverty, the result of an unjust accusation, rather than disgrace, would commend itself to the soul of Dante, as not without a parallel in his own character and fortunes (*Life*, c. 8). Such a soul was a fit comrade even for the greatest of the Emperors.

CANTO VII.

Dogmas—The Sin of Adam—The Incarnation—The Corruptible and Incorruptible.

"*HOSANNA, Sanctus Deus Sabaoth,
Superillustrans claritate tuâ
Felices ignes horum Malachoth.*"

Thus, turning to his song, appeared to say
That form I saw, upon whose kingly head 5
Shone, with a twofold lustre, twy-form ray.
It and the others danced in measured tread,
And like to sparks that flit their swift-winged way,
In sudden distance from me vanished.
I doubted, and within me, "Say it, say," 10
I cried, "O say it to my Lady fair,
Who with her sweet dew doth my cravings stay."
But that deep awe, which o'er me sway doth bear,
Whenever I or BE or ICE spell,
Bowed me as one who doth to sleep prepare. 15
Short while let Beatrice that doubt dwell,
And then began with such a radiant smile,
'Twould make a man i' the fire say, All was well.
"My mind, which no deception can beguile,
Hath seen that thou o'er doubt how vengeance just 20
Can justly be avenged, dost brood awhile;
But I that bondage from thy mind will thrust:
And give thou heed, for know these words of mine
Will to thy soul a doctrine high intrust.

¹ The three Hebrew words indicate possibly an elementary knowledge of Hebrew, for which Dante's friendship with Immanuel of Rome (i. p. lxxvi.) may sufficiently account. "Hosanna," however, is used by him not in its strict meaning as = "Save us," but as in *Matt.* xxi. 9, 15; *Mark* xi. 9; *John* xii. 13, as a vague utterance of praise. "Sabaoth" he would find in the *Vulg.* of *James* v. 4 and in the *Te Deum*. "Malachoth" appears, instead of the more correct "Mamlachoth," in the *Prolog. Gal.* of Jerome prefixed to the *Vulg.* in the sense of "kingdoms," as it is used here (Witte, *D. F.* ii. 43).

⁸ The "substance" is the soul of Justinian, the "double light" that of the lawgiver and the emperor.

¹⁰ The words of Justinian (C. vi. 90-93) had raised a question in Dante's mind. Thrice he whispered to himself "Tell it to her," but thrice his reverence for the very syllables of Beatrice's name (S. 2; *V. N. c.* 2) restrained his utterance. His silence was rewarded by a smile which would have brought blessedness even in the flames of *Purg.* xxvii. 52. She reads his thoughts and solves the problem. How could the death of Christ, in itself a righteous expiation of the Divine wrath, call in its turn for another expiation?

Because he would not power of will resign 25
 To curb meant for his good, the man not born,
 Damning himself, damned also all his line ;
 And so man's race lay feeble and forlorn,
 For many an age, in grievous error's way,
 Till God's Word pleased on earth to make sojourn, 30
 Where man's frail nature, wont so far to stray
 From its Creator, in one Person met
 With IT, as Love Eternal showed the way.
 Now fix thy glance at that before thee set :
 This nature, with its own Creator wed, 35
 Was pure and good, as when unfallen yet ;
 But by itself alone 'twas banished
 From Paradise, because itself it tore
 From way which would to truth and life have led.
 If, therefore, by the nature that it bore 40
 Be measured what the Cross wrought out of pain,
 None ever had of righteous vengeance more.
 But never was such cruel wrong again,
 If we the Person suffering there behold,
 Who did that nature with His own sustain. 45
 Thus from one act spring things of diverse mould ;
 God and the Jews the same death did delight ;
 Earth quaked, and Heaven its portals did unfold.
 It ought not then to seem hard in thy sight,
 When it is said that righteous punishment 50
 Was afterwards avenged by judgment right.
 But now I see thy mind is straitly pent,
 With thought on thought entangled and entwined,
 From which to free itself it waits intent.

25 We enter on a profound theological discussion of the Atonement as taught by Aquinas. Adam, by transgressing the restraint imposed upon his will, brought condemnation on himself and all descended from him. So mankind lay diseased and in the darkness of error till the time of the Incarnation of the Divine Word (*SUMM.* i. 34, 22, iii. 32, 1). The human nature which He took was sinless, as that of Adam had been at his creation, but it was human nature still, and, as such, exiled from Paradise and rightly subject to the punishment of the cross. Not so, however, the sinless Person who had taken that nature into union with Himself. For Him the death on the cross was an unjust punishment, and the Jews were guilty of that injustice. What on one side "satisfied" the justice of God, "satisfied," on the other, their malice, and the punishment of which Titus was the agent was therefore a righteous vengeance. It will be seen that Dante's theory of the Atonement is not identical with either that of the early Church, or that of Anselm in the *Cur Deus Homo*, or that of Aquinas (*SUMM.* ii. 46, 1), or the forensic view of a vicarious satisfaction which has been dominant in Protestant theology. Here also he seems to take his own ground and to form a "*partie per se stesso*." Of the great mediæval theologians, Hugh of St. Victor seems the one in whose

Thou say'st, 'What I now hear full clear I find,
 But why this was God's will is unrevealed,
 For our redemption this one way assigned.'
 This His decree, my brother, lies concealed
 From each man's eyes who doth a spirit own,
 O'er which Love's fire no full-grown power doth wield. 60
 Yet truly since at this same mark 'tis known
 We may gaze long, with little clearly learned,
 I'll tell why such plan was as worthiest shown.
 Goodness Divine, which from Itself hath spurned
 All envy, burning in Itself doth glow, 65
 So that eternal beauties are discerned.
 Whate'er from It doth as immediate flow,
 No limit knows, because It knows no change,
 Where, as a seal, It doth Its impress show.
 Whate'er from It doth as immediate range, 70
 Is wholly free, as subject unto none
 Of things endowed with novel power and strange.
 More it delights as it is more Its own,
 For the blest beams that all irradiate
 In that most like them are most vivid known. 75
 In all these blessings doth participate
 The human creature, and, if one should fail,
 Needs must he fall from that his high estate.
 Sin only can to disendow prevail,
 And make him unlike to the Good Supreme, 80
 For then but little doth Its light avail :

footsteps he treads most closely. Comp. Oxenham, *Cath. Doctr. of Atonement*, c. iv.;
 Dorner, *Person of Christ*, P. i. sect. 3, both for this and the next question.

60 The question is an instance of the Rationalism of the inquiring intellect even in the
 Mediæval Church. Why were the Incarnation and the Passion the method chosen for
 redemption? Could not God have pardoned mankind without them? To this Beatrice
 answers on the threshold of the discussion, in the very spirit of Hugh of St. Victor, that
 none can rightly judge in the matter whose mind has not been ripened in the glow of Divine
 Love.

65 The solution starts from the conception of the absolute goodness of the Divine Will.
 Is it there can be no touch of envy (*James* i. 5; *Boeth.* iii. 9). What He creates by a direct
 act, *i.e.*, the angels and the souls of men, bears on it His stamp of eternity, and its annihilation
 is inconceivable (*Summ.* i. 65, 1). It is free, and not subject to new or second causes, such,
e.g., as the influences of the stars, from which Dante uniformly represents man's will as
 exempted. The more it resembles Him the more He delights therein; and man has this
 resemblance in a higher measure than any other material creature. If freedom or likeness to
 God be not found in him, he is fallen from his nobility, and sin has brought about this fall,
 and so he shares but little in the light of God.

And ne'er can he his dignity redeem,
 Unless, where sin leaves void, he satisfy
 With righteous pains for evil's pleasant dream.
 Your nature, when it sinned so utterly 85
 In its first seed, was driven from Paradise,
 As from the glory of such dignity :
 Nor could it be regained, if, subtly wise,
 Thou takest note, by any other way
 Than that which through or this or that ford lies ; 90
 Either that God should put the guilt away
 Of His free bounty, or that man for sin
 Due satisfaction should in person pay.
 Fix now thine eyes the deep abyss within 95
 Of the eternal counsels, with thy might,
 Bent the full meaning of my words to win.
 Man, in his limitations, ne'er aright
 Could satisfy, since ne'er could he descend,
 Obeying now, depths answering to the height,
 Which he thought, disobeying, to ascend ; 100
 And this the reason is why man could ne'er,
 Left to himself, make due and full amend.
 So was it meet that God the task should bear,
 And in His own ways man's whole life renew ;
 I say, or in the one, or in the pair. 105
 But forasmuch as favour doth accrue
 To work from worker, as it doth disclose
 Of that heart whence it springs the goodness true,
 Goodness Divine, whose seal the whole world shows, 110
 To work Its will, by all and every way,
 To raise you up again to true life, chose :
 Nor 'twixt the last night and the primal day
 Was ever process so sublime and high
 Wrought or by this or that, or shall for aye ;

⁸⁵ The next stage in the argument is that restoration is impossible without penitence and satisfaction, or, in their absence, the free love of God pardoning without them. Man could not make satisfaction by himself, for his guilt had consisted in aspiring to be like God (*Gen.* iii. 5), and there was no depth of lowliness to which his obedience could descend as a set-off against that guilt. God magnified His goodness more in manifesting Himself in Christ than in remitting sins by a simple act of power, for in that He set forth both His attributes of justice and of mercy. That self-humiliation of the Son of God was of all methods the most magnificent. So far Dante's theory of the Atonement approximates to that of the *Cur Deus Homo* of Anselm, though it is not identical with it.

For God was far more bounteous in supply, 115
 Giving Himself that man himself might raise,
 Than if He of Himself had put sin by.
 And scant and poor had proved all other ways
 For claims of justice, but that God's own Son,
 Become incarnate, should Himself abase. 120
 And now to fill thy cravings every one,
 I turn again one point to make more clear,
 That thou may'st see it e'en as I have done.
 Thou say'st, 'I see the fire, I see the air,
 The earth and water, and each compound blent, 125
 Last but a while and then corruption share.'
 Yet these things God's creative work present;
 Therefore, if that which I have said be sure,
 Corruption's touch for them were never meant.
 The angels, Brother, and this region pure 130
 In which thou art, created we may call,
 In their whole being, as they now endure;
 But those, the elements thou namest, all,
 And those things also which of them are made,
 Formed by created virtue, lower fall. 135
 Created was the matter there displayed;
 Created was that virtue which inspires
 These stars, which rolling round them are conveyed.
 The soul that every plant or brute acquires
 Draws, with potential elements combined, 140
 The light and motion of those holy fires.
 But this your life immediate source doth find
 In the Supreme Beneficence, and Love
 So fills it that It thither draws our mind.

¹³⁴ Yet another doubt arises. Beatrice had said (l. 67) that the creatures of God's hands were sharers in His eternity. But men see that the four elements, and the creatures that are compounded of them, are transitory and corruptible. How is that seeming contradiction to be reconciled? And so there comes another *distinguo*. Angels and the heavenly spheres and the souls of men (*Purg.* xvi. 85, xxv. 72) are the result of an immediate act of creation. They therefore are incorruptible (*Summ.* i. 66, 2, i. 2. 49, 4). But the visible material world, compounded of the elements, is the work of intermediate and created agents, the effect of second causes, and therefore subject to decay. This holds good of the stars as distinct from the heavenly spheres, of the "soul" or life of animals or plants. But man's soul, as had been said before, comes from the creative act of God without any intermediate agency. Yes, and this is true also of man's body. That also was represented in *Gen.* i. as created by the hand of God. And on this ground, as in itself sufficient, Dante is content to rest not only the immortality of the soul, but the resurrection of the body. I state, without discussing, his argument. It will be clear, at least, how far his belief was from what we have learnt to call the doctrine of Conditional Immortality.

And thus thou may'st with further reasoning prove 145
 Your resurrection, if thou meditate
 How human flesh was fashioned from above,
 Then, when our two first parents were create."

CANTO VIII.

The Third Heaven, of Venus—Charles Martel of Hungary—Eternal Providence—Diversities of Gifts.

To its own cost, the world to hear was found
 How the fair Cyprian darted love insane,
 In that third epicycle moving round ;
 Wherefore not only in old error vain 5
 Did ancient nations give her honour due
 Of votive cries and sacrifices slain,
 But worshipped Cupid and Dione too,
 This as her mother, that as her dear son,
 And said that Dido's lap his presence knew ;
 And so from her, through whom my song's begun, 10
 They took the name of that same planet fair,
 Which, from one side or the other, woos the sun.
 I did not see that I had mounted there,
 But proof enough my Lady gave to me
 Through wondrous increase of her beauty rare. 15

¹ From the sphere of Mercury the travellers pass to that of Venus. Following the same path of thought as to stellar influences as before, the souls that are met here are those whose earthly life was coloured by the temperament (one shrinks in this case from the adjective which corresponds to "mercurial" or "jovial") which that planet was believed to impress on those born under its influence, and which, even when Divine grace triumphed over the temptations which it brought with it, made them different from other blessed souls.

² An epicycle was one of the special terms of the Ptolemaic system, which assumed that each planet moved in a circle which always had its centre in the circumference of the great orbit of the planet. I need not enter into the astronomic reason for this. Milton, it will be remembered, probably following Galileo, sneers at them (*P. L.* viii. 84).

³ Dione, the daughter of Oceanus and Tethys, was the mother of Venus Aphrodite, and, with Cupid, the son of Venus, shared the worship which was paid to her (Hesiod, *Theog.* 353; Hom. *Il.* v. 370). For Dido, see *Æn.* i. 657-660.

⁴ Venus as a planet is now before the sun, and now behind, known in the morning as Lucifer (*Isa.* xiv. 12), in the evening as Hesperus.

⁵ The ascent, as before (*C.* ii. 23), is instantaneous. All that he knows is that the face of Beatrice is radiant with a new glory; and in the brightness, lamps yet more bright are discerned, dancing rhythmically in their joy.

And as within a flame a spark we see,
 And as within a voice a voice we hear,
 When one is firm, one changes fitfully,
 So then in that light other lamps appear,
 Moving in circle, more or less in speed,
 Methinks, as is their gaze eternal clear.
 Never did winds from chilly clouds proceed
 So swift, invisible or visible,
 That would not seem as slack and slow indeed
 To one who had those lights divine seen well,
 Come to us, leaving off their winding dance,
 Begun where Seraphim in glory dwell
 And behind those that did in front advance
 Sounded "Hosanna," so that aye since then
 I long it should once more my soul entrance.
 And one of them drew nigh, and in this strain
 Began alone: "All ready now are we
 To do thy will, that in us joy thou gain.
 We turn with princedoms that in high Heaven be,
 One orbit, one revolving, and one love,
 As in the world 'twas said of old by thee,
 'Ye who with simple will the third Heaven move,'
 And are so full of love, that, thee to please,
 Rest for a while shall not less welcome prove."
 And when mine eyes had turned away from these
 To seek my Lady with due reverence,
 And were by her content and set at ease,

¹⁸ The description comes from an expert in music, who distinguished between the *canto fermo* of one who sustained the main theme of song, while other voices varied in their melodious play around it.

²² The "visible" winds are the lightning-flashes which mediæval meteorology explained as being caused by the collision of opposing currents (*Trés.* ii. 37).

²⁶ Seraphim are named as being, in the current Angelology of the time, those who excelled in love, as the Cherubim (*C.* xi. 36-38, xxviii. 99) excelled in knowledge.

³⁰ Have we the feeling which had been often felt after the psalmody of earth transferred to the Hosanna of Paradise? For Dante's love of music, comp. *Purg.* ii. 108.

³² The joy of the blessed souls consists in imparting joy. They are ready to satisfy the desires of the poet because his very presence among them has satisfied their desires. That presence is dear to them because in the *Cannone* which they quote (*C.* xiv.), and on which he evidently looks back with a parental fondness, he had already sung their praises. According to the classification of the seven spheres, that of Venus belongs to the Principalities (*C.* xxviii. 125; *Conv.* ii. 6).

Back to that light they turned whose eloquence
 So much had promised, and "Speak, who are ye?"
 My voice exclaimed with eagerness intense. 45
 Ah! how that light grew more and more to see
 When I thus spoke, through that great gladness new
 Which came to crown its old felicity.
 Thus changed, it spake: "The world my presence knew
 Short time below, and had it been but more, 50
 Much ill that shall be then should not ensue.
 My great joy hides me from thee, and doth pour
 Its radiance round about me, and conceals,
 Like creature whom its own silk covers o'er.
 Thou lov'dst me much, good cause that love reveals; 55
 For had I stayed below I then had shown
 More than the budding leaves of what love feels.
 That left bank that is watered by the Rhone,
 Where with the Sorga's waters it is blent,
 Me for a while as sovereign lord did own, 60

⁴⁴ I follow the reading "*Di' chi siete*" rather than its variants "*Dek! chi,*" and others.

⁴⁵ The speaker is Charles Martel (b. 1270, d. 1295), son of Charles II. of Naples (*Purg.* vii. 127, xx. 79), and titular king of Hungary. He married (1291) Clemenza, daughter of the Emperor Rudolph of Hapsburg. Commentators describe him as fair in person, a lover of music, and song, and beauty in all its forms. In 1294 he stayed for twenty days in Florence waiting for the return of his two brothers from France, and, as lines 55-57 show, he and Dante were drawn together by the ties of a warm and intimate friendship. Possibly he took the place in the poet's heart which had been left vacant by Guido Cavalcanti (*H.* x. 63). Villani (viii. 13) dwells at length on the magnificence of his retinue, in green and scarlet, with shields on which the arms of Naples and Hungary were emblazoned in red and gold.

⁵⁰ The words probably point to hopes, which he had shared with Dante, that he might have averted the contest between his father's house and that of Aragon.

⁵³ Few comparisons are more absolutely original. The silkworm hides itself in its own silk; the spirits are sheathed by the effulgence of their own joy. In C. xxvi. 97 we have another of the same kind, perhaps even stranger.

⁵⁵ The words seem almost to imply a David and Jonathan attachment, yet, unless we assume that he was one of an embassy to Naples at the time of Charles's coronation there as king of Hungary in 1290, their personal intercourse must have been limited to the short period of Charles's stay at Florence. Possibly the idealist, "*trasmutabile sempre*" (C. v. 99), dreamt a dream of being a king's friend with an opening for doing great things. Charles was at once the heir of Provence through his grandmother, Beatrice, of Naples, in direct succession to his father, of Hungary (though with a title not undisputed), through his mother Mary, of Sicily, through his wife, Clemenza, and would have found in his children heirs at once of the houses of Hapsburg and of Anjou. Such a prince, bright, fascinating, friendly, might well have seemed to Dante likely to be among the mightiest potentates of the time, inaugurating a reign of peace. His death was probably the first of the great disappointments which were the discipline of his life, and which culminated in the death of Henry of Luxemburg (vol. i. p. cix.) As it was, the succession of Charles Robert, son of Charles Martel, to the throne of Naples was disputed by his uncle Robert, the third son of Charles II., who was recognised as heir by his father's will. Clemenza died a few days after her husband.

⁶⁰ The Sorgue, memorable in its connexion with Petrarch, flows from Vaucluse into the Rhone a little above Avignon.

And that horn of Ausonia whose extent
 Bari, Catona, Gaeta doth hold,
 Whence to the sea are Tronto, Verde sent.
 Already did my brow the crown enfold
 Of that fair land where Danube's waters flow, 65
 When they no more their German banks behold ;
 And fair Trinacria, which doth darkened show
 Between Pachynum and Pelorus, near
 The gulf where Eurus doth most fiercely blow,
 (Not through Typhœus, but the sulphur there,) 70
 Would have still waited for the kingly line
 That through me Charles' and Rudolph's stamp doth bear,
 If evil rule, which ever wrath doth twine
 Round subjects' hearts, had let Palermo be,
 Nor to the cry of 'Death ! Death ! Death !' incline, 75
 And if my brother had foreseen this, he
 The greedy Catalonians' poverty
 Had fled, that he from trouble might be free ;
 For truly there is need of heedful eye,
 His own, or others', that upon his boat, 80
 O'erladen, no more heavy load should lie.
 His nature, which doth bear degenerate note,
 Niggard from bounteous, such troops had employed
 As had not cared o'er heaped-up chest to gloat."

⁶⁵ Bari, on the Adriatic coast ; Gaeta, on the Bay of Naples ; Catona (with *v. l.* Crotona), on the southern point of Calabria, opposite Messina, are named as limits which practically include the whole of Ausonia = Southern Italy. Two rivers bear the name of Verde, one a tributary of the Tronto, not far from Ascoli, the other is identified with the Garigliano. Here probably the latter is meant, the object being to give the two boundaries of the kingdom of Naples. Comp. *Purg.* iii. 131.

⁶⁶ The country watered by the Danube = Hungary ; Trinacria = Sicily. Pachynum and Pelorus are two of the promontories which form the points of its triangle.

⁶⁷ Eurus is the south-east wind, or sirocco, which blows over the Gulf of Catania. Dante, as a physicist, is careful to note that he does not accept the legend that the Titan Typhœus, buried under *Ætna* (*Met.* v. 346-352 ; *Æn.* iii. 560-587), was the cause of the eruption and the wind.

⁷³ Dante puts the condemnation of the tyranny which led to the Sicilian Vespers (he was seventeen when the tidings reached Italy in April 1282) into the mouth of the grandson of the tyrant. That cry of "Death" rang through all Italy, and was even now echoing in his ears. If I mistake not, we may find other echoes in *S.* viii. 8 ; *Can.* iv. 42. Had the two friends conversed on the tragedy when they met in 1294 ?

⁷⁶ Robert, the younger brother of Charles Martel (*n.* on l. 55), was Duke of Calabria, but did not come to the throne of Naples till 1309. He and his brother John were left as hostages in the hands of Alphonso of Aragon in 1297, and were only liberated on the intervention of Boniface VIII. in June 1295 (*Purg.* vii. 110, xx. 79). Robert, on his return to Naples, brought with him many Catalan officers and other dependants, and their greed of gain passed into a proverb, at least in Naples, as a burden which the exchequer could scarcely bear.

⁸² The liberality of Charles II. is the only virtue which Dante allows him (*C.* xix. 128).

"Because I deem the lofty bliss enjoyed 85
 Through this thy speech, by me, O Master mine,
 There, whence all good starts, where its goal doth bide,
 Is, as I see it, seen by eyes of thine,
 It more delights me, and this too is dear,
 That thou discern'st it in the Mind divine. 90
 Glad hast thou made me; e'en so make it clear,
 Since in thy speech I find perplexity,
 How from sweet seed can bitter plant appear."
 So I to him; and he to me: "Could I
 To this thy question but one truth explain, 95
 To what thou turn'st thy back thou'lt turn thine eye.
 The Good which all this realm thy steps attain
 Turns and contents, so works that, as a might,
 Its Providence in these vast orbs doth reign:
 And not alone things seen with prescient sight 100
 Dwell in that Mind that's in itself complete,
 But with them all that works to keep them right.
 And so where'er this bow sends arrow fleet,
 It falls, predestined, to its end foreseen,
 As dart directed to its centre meet. 105
 If this were not so, then this Heaven had been,
 Where now thou walkest, such that it would be
 Of ruin, not of wisest art the scene.
 This cannot chance unless those stars we see
 Be ruled by Minds that feeble are and frail, 110
 The First Cause failing to work perfectly.
 Would'st thou this truth should more itself unveil?"
 "Not so," said I, "for 'tis impossible
 That Nature should in necessities fail."

The avarice of Robert is noted by Villani (xii. 10). Petrarch, on the other hand, who received his crown of laurel at his hands, praises him to the skies as a patron of letters. Benvenuto confirms Dante with an anecdote. Robert had quoted to his Chancellor the text "*Spiritus ubi vult spirat*," and the Chancellor replied "*Robertus, ubi vult pilat*" (*Scart. and Butl.*) Comp. *Purg.* vii. 124, xx. 79.

⁸⁸ The joy of Dante at seeing and hearing his friend are mingled with a new difficulty. He had believed in the doctrine of heredity. His friend's words (l. 82) seemed to imply the opposite. The answer is found (1) in the general truth that the providence of God, working through the stellar influences (l. 99), ordereth all things well. If that were not so, the *cosmos* of the world would become a chaos (comp. Hooker, *E. P.* i. 1. 3, 2; *Conv.* iii. 15), and this would imply imperfection not only in the angelic intelligences (l. 37) which guide the stars, but in their Primal Cause, *i.e.*, in God Himself.

Then he : " Now say if it would be less well
 For man on earth were he not citizen."
 " Yea," said I ; " here no reason need'st thou tell."
 " And can this be unless the lives of men
 Differ on earth, through office different ?
 No, if your Master writes with wisdom's pen."
 So to this point deductively he went,
 And then concluded : " Therefore needs must be
 That diverse are the roots of each man's bent :
 So here a Solon, Xerxes there we see,
 Here a Melchizedek, and there the man
 Whose flight through air marred his son's destiny ;
 The spherul nature, which, like seal, its plan
 Stamps on man's mortal wax, works well its art,
 But difference of hostel doth not scan.
 Thence comes it Esau hath his separate part
 In birth from Jacob, that Quirinus came
 From sire so base he claims from Mars to start.
 A generated nature still the same
 Pathway would take as those that generate,
 Unless God's providence that law o'ercame.
 Now before thee is that behind of late,
 But that thou know that I in thee delight,
 Thee with corollary I'll decorate.
 Ever doth Nature, if perchance it light
 On alien fortune, like all other seed
 Out of its own soil, fail to work aright ;

¹¹⁶ The answer to the question is assumed from Arist. *Pol.* i. 1, and is expounded at length in *Mon.* i. 12-14. Man is by nature, that is, by God's appointment, born for a corporate, not an individual, life. He finds his perfection as member of a state. But a state implies diversity of gifts, characters, functions, and therefore there is this diversity, wrought as before through the stellar influences, in the characters of those who compose it. As extreme instances of this diversity we have Solon, Xerxes, Melchisedech, and Dædalus. And the planets work out their appointed function without looking to the stock from which men spring. Esau and Jacob are children of the same parents (Augustine somewhat more logically takes them as an argument against the astrologers, *Civ. Dei*, v. 4). Quirinus (= Romulus), the son of Rhea Silvia by an unknown father, was so famous a warrior that men ascribed his parentage to Mars. It is singular to find Dante rejecting what Virgil gives as history (*Æn.* i. 274).

¹²² The doctrine of heredity therefore holds good, subject to the provision that it is not a necessary law, but may be modified by the Divine Will working through the stars or otherwise.

¹²³ The practical inference from the theory is that Nature gives the qualities which fit men for a vocation of some kind, but that circumstances, *i.e.*, the results of man's perversity, thwart her purpose. What was wanted for a perfect polity was that men should study a man's qualities as indicating his vocation. As it was, they too often made the born soldier a monk, and the born king a preacher. The allusions come appropriately from Charles Martel. His

And if the world below would give good heed
 To Nature's first and fundamental rule,
 Then would it have a virtuous race indeed ;
 But ye still turn off to religion's school
 One who was born to gird himself with sword,
 And take as king some sermonising fool ;
 And so your track the right road hath ignored."

145

CANTO IX.

*The Lovers in the Heaven of Venus—Cunizza—Folco of
 Marseilles—Rahab.*

WHEN that thy Charles had thus, Clemenza fair,
 Made all things clear, he cited, one by one,
 The ills his seed through cunning frauds should bear,
 But said, "Be dumb, and let the years roll on."
 So I can say but this, that wailing due
 Will come for all wrongs that to you are done.
 And now that holy light's life yet anew
 Turned to the Sun which fills it with its rays,
 As to that Good where "All in all" is true.
 Ah ! souls deceived, unholy in your ways,
 Who turn your hearts from good like this, and long
 With upturned brows for vain and false displays !

5

10

elder brother Lewis abdicated his princely rights, became a Franciscan friar, and in 1296 was made Bishop of Toulouse by Boniface VIII. Robert, who became king of Naples, on the contrary (*Vill.* xii. 10), gave himself to philosophy and theology as if he had been a Dominican preacher. How he could sermonise, when occasion offered, may be seen in his letter to the Florentines after the memorable inundation of the Arno in 1333 (*Vill.* xii. 4). Dante's feelings were embittered by the fact that he had been the ally of the Florentines throughout in their resistance to Henry of Luxemburg, and on the Emperor's death had been appointed Vicar of the Empire in Italy by the Pope.

¹ The wife and daughter of Charles Martel were both named Clemenza. Most of the ancient commentators refer the words to the latter. The former, however, seems more likely. She was known to Dante in the beauty of her youth, and her daughter, wife of Louis X. of France, was probably not so known. Some writers identify Clemenza with the mother of Charles, but she was Mary of Hungary.

² The words refer to the treatment of Charles's children by his brother Robert, who maintained his position as king of Naples in defiance of their rightful claims (see *u.* on C. viii. 55). The retribution implied in l. 6 is found in the death of Robert's brother Peter and his nephew Carlotto at the battle of Monte Cattini, in that of his only son, Charles, Duke of Calabria, and the invasion of Apulia by Lewis, king of Hungary (*Vill.* ix. 62).

³ The reproach is general in terms, but is obviously meant for the wrong-doers, Robert and his counsellors, implied in l. 2. The readings vary between "*faturs empie*," and "*faturs ed empie*."

And lo! another of that shining throng
 Approached me, and its will to give delight
 Made known by flashing forth a ray more strong. 15
 The eyes of Beatrice, fixed aright
 Upon me, as before, assured me well
 Of dear assent to my desire for light.
 "I pray thee, quickly meet my wish, and tell,
 O Spirit blest," I said, "by some sure sign 20
 That in thy mind my thoughts reflected dwell."
 And then that light, which yet as new did shine,
 From out the depth whence erst its song flowed on,
 Drew near, as though good deed brought joy divine.
 "In that part of the land that vile has grown, 25
 Italian, which between Rialto lies
 And where Piava's, Brenta's springs are known,
 A hill is seen, not over-high, to rise,
 Whence 'gainst that land erewhile was downward driven
 A fiery torch in hostile enterprise. 30

¹⁵ The other splendour is, as l. 32 shows, Cunizza, who, in answer to Dante's wish, tells the story of her life. It was a sufficiently strange one. The sister of Ezzelin da Romano (*l.* 1189), she had been married in 1222 (probably it was a political marriage) to Richard, Count of St. Boniface, the head of the Guelphs of Verona. She fascinated Sordello (*Purg.* vi. 74, vii. 3), and with him left her husband's house. Sordello went to Provence, and she retired to her brother's Alberic's court at Treviso, where she had an intrigue with a knight named Bonio. On his death Ezzelin gave her in marriage to Count Rainier of Braganza. She next appears, on his death, as the wife of Salione Buzzicari, Ezzelin's astrologer. After the death of Ezzelin (*H.* xii. 110) and his brother, she found a retreat in Florence. The last fact known of her is that she made her will in that city (1265), in the house of Cavalcante dei Cavalcanti, father of Dante's friend Guido (*H.* x. 53). One wonders at first that so stern a judge as Dante did not place her along with Semiramis or Dido, or, at least, as waiting to pass through the cleansing fire of *Purg.* xxvii. 49. The fact just recorded contains, perhaps, the solution of the problem. Her latter days at Florence were said to have been marked by piety and charity. Even before that, she was said to have relieved, as far as she could, the victims of Ezzelin's oppression. By her will she gave freedom to her serfs (Troja, *Vell.* 1856, p. 294). The date of her death is unknown. It is possible that Dante himself may have had early memories of the gracious penitent lady, still retaining much of the fascination of her former beauty, or may have heard of such memories, and of the romance of her love for the great Mantuan poet from Guido Cavalcanti, who was sixteen years older than himself. Anyhow, he believed that she had repented, and therefore did not shrink from placing her in Paradise. He remembered, it may be, the story of a certain woman who also had had five husbands (*John* iv. 18), of a woman whose sins, that were many, were forgiven her because she loved much (*Luke* vii. 47). We Englishmen, at all events, may remember that Archbishop Tenison did not refuse to preach Nell Gwynne's funeral sermon, and assumed in it that she also had found pardon and peace in the Paradise of God. Browning, who identifies Cunizza with the Palma of his *Sordello*, the daughter of Ezzelin, gives a very different version of her story and character; but, as in the case of Sordello, we have to regret the absence of any *pièces justificatives*.

²⁵ The Marca Trevigiana is described, after Dante's manner, by its boundaries, the Rialto of Venice, the Brenta on the east (*H.* xv. 7), which rises in the hill-country of Chiarentana, and the Piava on the west, both flowing into the Gulf of Venice.

³⁰ The hill is Romano, between Padua and Bassano, on which stood the castle of the tyrant Ezzelin. P. Dante reports a tradition that the mother of Ezzelin dreamt before his birth that she brought forth a fiery torch, the flame of which devoured the whole country round (*H.* xii. 110).

To this and me one parent stock was given :
 Cunizza was I called, and I shine here
 Because o'ercome by this bright star of Heaven.
 But joyfully, self-pardoning, I bear
 What caused my fate, nor doth it breed annoy, 35
 Which to your crowd, perchance, will strange appear.
 Of this bright jewel, radiant in its joy,
 Which of our heaven nearest is to me,
 Great fame remained, nor aught shall it destroy,
 Until this century quintupled shall be. 40
 See if man's course for virtue should decide,
 So that new life may come when this shall flee !
 And yet they think not thus who now abide
 'Twixt Tagliamento and Adige's shore,
 And, though sore smitten, mourn not for their pride. 45
 But soon shall Padua dye the lake with gore
 Which bathes the walls of old Vicenza's town,
 As stubborn against duty as of yore.
 And where Cagnan' and Sile both flow down,
 One lords it proudly, goes with head reared high, 50
 The web to catch whom is already thrown.
 And Feltro yet will wail the treachery
 Of its base shepherd, guilty so that none
 To Malta came for like delinquency.

³⁴ The thought is a development of that of Lethe and Eunoe in *Purg.* xxviii. Cunizza tells how her life had been swayed by the influence of Venus, with no touch of shame, or even sorrow. All had worked for good, and, strange as it might seem to those who knew not the secrets of the new life, she could rejoice in all.

³⁷ The light is Folco of Marseilles (l. 94). The words of l. 40 have been interpreted as meaning that Folco's fame (he died in 1231) should last to the year 1500, or 1800, or 6500, according to the meaning given to "*incingua*." Was the poet reckoning on the immortality of fame given to Folco through his own verse?

⁴³ The people of the Trevisa March (the two boundaries are named in l. 44) are condemned as wanting in the energy which seeks after fame. Their sufferings under Ezzelein had not led them to repentance, and therefore Cunizza prophesies of the yet sharper punishments that are in store for them.

⁴⁶ Vicenza lay between the Guelph city Padua and the Ghibelline Verona. After the death of Ezzelein in 1250 it became subject to Padua, which in 1311 expelled Henry VII.'s vicar, and massacred the Ghibellines (*Vill.* ix. 36; *Purg.* vi. 95). Can Grande was then appointed Imperial Vicar of Vicenza, and defeated the Paduans in 1314 on the banks of the Bacchiglione, on which both cities stand, dyeing its waters with their blood, because they had held out against their duty to the Emperor, Henry VII.

⁴⁹ The two rivers named meet at Trevisa. The noble who lords it haughtily is Richard da Camino, son of the good Gherardo of *Purg.* xv. 124, who was assassinated (1312) while playing at chess, as some said, at the instigation of Can Grande, while others saw in it the revenge of a noble whose wife he had seduced. For him, therefore, Cunizza says, the web of destiny was already woven (*Murat. Ann.* 1312, in *Scart.*)

⁵² The Bishop of Feltro was Alessandro Novello (1298-1380). In 1314 he surrendered some Ghibelline fugitives who had taken refuge in his palace to the Podestà of Ferrara, by

Full large would be the vat in which should run 55
 The blood of the Ferrarese that he shed,
 And weary he who, weighing, one by one,
 The drops this kind priest shall have lavished
 To show his zeal for party ; gifts thus famed
 To that land's life shall be close fashionèd. 60
 Above are mirrors, Thrones ye them have named,
 And thence God doth, as judging, on us shine,
 So that right good seems all we've thus proclaimed."
 Here she was silent, giving me a sign
 That she had turned elsewhither, as she flew, 65
 Along her orbit, on her former line.
 The other glad one, whom before I knew,
 Became a thing resplendent to my sight,
 As when the sun lights up a ruby's hue.
 On high through joy there comes increase of light, 70
 As smiles appear on earth ; but down below,
 As the mind grieves the shade grows dark as night.
 "God seeth all ; from Him thy sight doth flow,"
 I said, "O blessed spirit, so that nought
 Of what He wills escapes thy power to know. 75
 That voice of thine, whence joy to Heaven is brought,
 With song that ever flows from those blest fires,
 Who of their six wings have a mantle wrought,
 Why fails it now to answer my desires ?
 I had not lingered so for thy demands, 80
 Knew I, as thou my heart, what thine requires."

whom they were put to death. Malta was apparently a prison where priestly criminals were sentenced to a life-long confinement, but commentators are at sea as to its locality, Rome, Montefiascone on the Lake of Bolsena, and Cittadella in the Paduan territory, being all named. The *Chron. Patav.* in Murat. *Antiq. Ital.* iv. 1139, describes the opening of this prison in 1256, when its inmates were led out, worn and haggard and shrinking from the light. On the other hand, Scartazzini decides in favour of a prison at Viterbo, mentioned in an unpublished chronicle as having been built in 1255 for prisoners condemned by the Pope, and known as La Malta. Such a prison, Dante says, would be the fit abode for the priest who had taken this way of showing that he was true to his party—a way only too congenial to the sanguinary temper of his countrymen.

⁶¹ The Thrones are the third order of the hierarchy of Dionysius the Areopagite (c. 7). They, like other angels, are as mirrors reflecting the Divine knowledge of things past, present, and to come, and thus Cunizza can vouch for the truth of her predictions. Comp. C. xxviii. 103; *Conv.* ii. 6.

⁶² On Cunizza's departure the soul of Folco glows with a new brightness, that being the sign of joy in Paradise, as are smiles on earth, even as gloom or darkness are signs of sorrow in Hell. Encouraged by that brightness, Dante applies to him for further knowledge. The student will note the *tour de force* of the verbs formed from pronouns in l. 73, 81—*s'inizia, m'intuassi, l'immi*—which I have been compelled to paraphrase. The fires with the six wings are the Seraphim of *Isai.* vi. 2.

"The greatest valley where the sea expands,"
 Then in this strain his words began to flow,
 "Except that ocean compassing all lands,
 Between discordant shores so far doth go 85
 'Gainst the sun's course, it makes meridian
 There where at first it forms horizon low.
 Along that valley's shore my childhood ran,
 'Twixt Ebro and the Magra, which divides
 With short course Genoese from Tuscan man. 90
 With the same sun from dawn till darkness hides,
 Lie Buggea and the land from whence I came,
 That with its own blood warmed its harbour-tides.
 Folco that people called me, who my name
 Knew well, and now this sphere by me in turn 95
 Imprest becomes, as I by it became;
 Because not more did Belus' daughter burn,
 Sychæus and Creusa both betrayed,
 Than I while yet my youth was apt to learn,
 Nor that deluded Rhodopean maid, 100
 Demophöon's victim, nor Alcides, when
 At Iole's fair shrine his soul was laid,

⁸² The greatest valley is the Mediterranean; the sea that engirdles the earth is the great ocean. The former is described after Dante's astronomical manner as making its western extremity the horizon to the meridian of its eastern, *i.e.*, as extending over ninety degrees of the earth's surface (*Purg.* xxvii. 1).

⁸⁹ The river Macra or Magra, in the Lunigiana, was recognised in Dante's time as the boundary between the Genoese territory and that of Florence. The Ebro is the Spanish river of that name. Marseilles is supposed to lie half-way between the two, nearly in the same meridian of longitude as Buggea, a city in Algeria. The slaughter referred to is that described by Lucan (iii. 572) as taking place when Brutus besieged Marseilles.

⁹⁴ Folco or Folchetto is named in *V. E.* ii. 6 as a Provençal poet. The facts reported of him are that he was the son of a wealthy merchant of Genoa; that he wrote *Canzoni* and *Serventi* after the manner of the Troubadours; that he was high in favour with Richard I. of England and Count Raymond of Toulouse; that he loved the wife of another patron, Barale of Marseilles, and to conceal his passion pretended to love her sister; that on her death, and that of his own wife, he renounced the world and entered a Cistercian monastery; that he was afterwards Bishop of Marseilles, and took an active part in the persecution of the Albigenes. It is obvious that some portions of this history presented a parallel, more or less close, to Dante's own experience, and may have drawn out his sympathy for the strangely adventurous life.

⁹⁸ The daughter of Belus = Dido. Sychæus was her first husband. Creusa, the first wife of Æneas (*H. v.* 62; *Æn.* i. 720-722).

¹⁰⁰ Phyllis, of Mount Rhodope in Thrace, was beloved by Demophöon of Athens. On his deserting her she was changed into an almond tree (*Ovid, Heroid.* ii.). Hercules, after conquering Eurystus, king of Thrace, fell in love with his daughter, Iole, brought her to his home, and hence roused the jealousy of Deianeira (*Met.* ix. 134-238; *Heroid.* ix. 5, and *Soph. Trach.*)

Here mourn we not, but smile for what was then ;
 Not at the guilt—that comes not to our mind—
 But at the Foresight ordering all for men. 105
 Here gaze we on the skill which hath designed
 Such vast effect, and so the good we see,
 From world on high to world below consigned.
 But that each wish of thine thou bear with thee
 Fulfilled, that had its birth in this our sphere, 110
 My speech a little while prolonged must be.
 Thou fain would'st know whom light encircleth here,
 One who beside me sparkling so is seen,
 As flashes sunlight on the waters clear.
 Now know thou that within there rests serene, 115
 Rahab, and being in our hosts arrayed,
 Is in their highest order sealed as queen.
 She by this Heaven, where comes to point the shade
 Which your earth casts, was welcomed first of all
 The souls with which the Christ His triumph made. 120
 Well was it she, as trophy, should recall
 Somewhere in Heaven that glorious victory,
 Which to the lot of outstretched hands did fall,
 Because she saw with fond and favouring eye
 Joshua's first glory in that Holy Land, 125
 Which the Pope keeps not much in memory.

¹⁰⁵ The secret of the calm joy of the souls that had been sinful is explained. Lethe has taken away all painful memory of evil (*Purg.* xxxiii. 96), and it is seen only as being what, when repented of, it actually was—a stepping-stone to higher things. The induction is carried farther in the case of Rahab the harlot (*Jos.* ii. iv.), who was foremost among the souls rescued by the Descent into Hell. I have not found any earlier trace of this belief. She is named as an example of the "harlots" who "enter the kingdom of Heaven" (*Isid. Hisp. Conson. in Jos.* ii.). Rahab is not named in the Gospel of Nicodemus, which is the starting-point of most traditions on the subject.

¹¹⁵ The earth's shadow is assumed to terminate on the surface of Venus. The souls that were in the three lower spheres were, that is, still in the shadow of earthly affections, and therefore excluded from the higher degrees of blessedness.

¹²⁰ Rahab, *i.e.*, had been in the *Limbus Patrum* (*H.* iv. 46-63), waiting for salvation. She shared in the triumph of the Descent into Hades, and of all the souls then rescued, she was the first to find her appointed sphere in Venus. One wonders at not finding the Magdalene in that planet. Did Dante avoid the commonplaces of mediæval tradition, or did he question the tradition, which, from Gregory the Great onward, identified her with the "woman which was a sinner" of *Luke* vii. 42?

¹²⁵ The words have been explained (1) of the two hands that were nailed on the cross, (2) of those of Rahab as she let down the spies, (3) of those which Joshua stretched out in prayer and thus obtained victory (*Eccles.* xli. 1-3). Of these, (1) seems preferable. The fact that the harlot of Jericho was in Paradise was a witness of the redeeming love.

¹²⁶ Acre had been taken by the Saracens in 1291. Neither Nicholas III. nor Boniface VIII. had taken active measures for a new crusade. Still less was that to be expected from the spontaneous action of one of the Avignon Popes. If, as is probable, this Canto was written after the death of Henry VII., we may remember that he had planned a crusade

Thy city, which was planted by his hand
 Who first in rebel pride his Maker spurned,
 And by whose envy so much woe was planned,
 Brings forth and spreads the flower which curse hath earned, 120
 Which leads the sheep and eke the lambs astray,
 Since it the shepherd to a wolf hath turned.
 For this the Gospels men have cast away,
 And the great Doctors, while Decretals claim
 Such study as their margins soiled betray. 135
 The Cardinals and Pope devour the same,
 Nor ever turn their thoughts to Nazareth,
 Where Gabriel once with wings wide open came.
 But Vaticano, and what else is yet
 Sacred in Rome, the chosen burial-place 140
 Of warriors who in Peter's line were set,
 Shall soon be freed from the adulterous race."

(*Vill.* ix. 1). Clement V. and John XXII. contented themselves with raising money for it (vol. i. p. cxliii.) The transition from Jericho to Florence and the vices of the Popes seem somewhat abrupt. Her resistance to the Emperor had clearly embittered the feelings of the exile against the city of his birth and the Guelph cause with which she was identified. To him Florence is a plant of Satan's planting, fruitful in a malignant envy like his (*Matt.* xv. 13; *Wisd.* ii. 24). The coins of Florence, gold as well as silver, were stamped with the lily, a *fleur-de-lys*, which was the badge of the city, and were hence known as florins. They served as a standard of currency throughout Italy, and were reproduced, with the addition of his name, by Pope John XXII. at Avignon in 1322 (*Vill.* ix. 171). So Dante says the greed of gain had turned the shepherd into a wolf (*H.* i. 49).

¹³⁴ Forged decretals, edicts, and letters of the early Popes first appeared under Nicholas I. in the ninth century. They were received as authentic by Innocent III., and became the chief armoury of the Popes in their warfare against the Empire. Gregory IX. had five books of them compiled by Raymond da Pennafort. Boniface VIII. added a sixth. In *Mon.* iii. 3 and *R.P.* ix. 7 Dante speaks with the utmost scorn of the theologians who gave their whole time and study to them, deserting Augustine and Gregory, Ambrose, Dionysius, and Beda. Roger Bacon, on the other hand, vents his wrath upon the students who devoted themselves to the civil law, the basis of the Ghibelline theory of polity, which was "destroying the Church of God, and through which the whole world was lying in wickedness." *Comp. Stud.* c. 55; *Op. Tert.* c. 24.

¹³⁷ The Popes care little for Nazareth, either as part of the Holy Land, which they ought to recover to Christendom by a new crusade, or as the starting-point of the Gospel record.

¹⁴³ The prophecy is of the nature of an echo of that of the Veltro of *H.* i. 101, and of the vision of *Purg.* xxxii., and refers probably to the death of Boniface VIII. in 1303, as the great corrupter of the Papacy. Possibly there may be an expression of a hope not quite extinguished even by Henry VII.'s death.

CANTO X.

*The Fourth Heaven, of the Sun—The Theologians—Albert of Cologne—
Thomas Aquinas, and others.*

Gazing upon His Son, with that high Love
Which each alike breathes forth eternally,
The first great Power, all human speech above,
Whate'er in mind or place revolves on high,
Made with such order that who looks thereon 5
Can never fail to taste His majesty.
Look thou with me, O Reader—look straight on
To those high spheres, and chiefly to the part
Where the two movements intersecting run,
And there begin to revel in the art 10
Of that Workmaster, who doth love it so
Within Himself, His eyes ne'er from it part.
See how from thence the path oblique doth go
Of that great circle which the stars doth bear
To satisfy the world that seeks to know. 15
And if their path did not thus wind and veer,
Much of Heaven's virtue would be spent in vain,
And every power below would feel death near.
And should it distance more or less attain
From the straight line, then much were incomplete, 20
Above, below, throughout the world's domain.
Now, Reader, sit thou still upon thy seat,
Musing o'er that which doth full meal precede,
If thou would'st rather joy than tedium meet.

¹⁻⁶ The theology of the poet is an echo of that of *John* i. 3-10; *Col.* i. 16; *Heb.* i. 2; as also of the Nicene and Athanasian Creeds. The Primal Might, *sc.* the Father, created the universe through the agency of the Son. The love of which he speaks is the Spirit that "proceedeth from the Father and the Son." To contemplate this is to "taste" something of the Divine perfection, and to this the reader is invited to uplift himself.

⁹ The two motions which intersect are those of the apparent diurnal motion from east to west, and that of the sun and the planets on the ecliptic, and the point of intersection is that of the vernal equinox, which is assumed, as in *H.* i. 38, as near the date of the poem.

¹⁶ The thought is like that of Hooker, *E. P.* i. 3, 2. If the relation of the ecliptic to the equator were other than it is, seasons and climates and stellar influences would be thrown into confusion, and life would pass into death, and the Divine purpose would be frustrated (*Comm.* ii. 15). Virtue and potency are distinguished from each other, as, in the terminology of Aristotle, the form and the matter.

²³ The bench on which the reader sits is either that on which the student sits at his desk,

I serve the meal ; thyself from henceforth feed ; 25
 Because the subject whereof now I write
 My whole attention for itself will need.
 The minister of Nature, chief in might,
 Who on the world imprints Heaven's virtue great,
 And measures time's succession with its light, 30
 Arriving at the point I named of late,
 Was circling forward, in the spires whereon
 Each hour it doth to us approximate ;
 And I was with him ; yet had knowledge none
 Of that ascent, except as one doth know, 35
 Just as it comes, the thought he lighteth on.
 'Tis Beatrice who doth guide us so
 From good to better thus immediately,
 Time can no measure of her movements show.
 How lustrous must have been her brilliancy 40
 Within the sun's bright sphere, to which I came,
 By light, and not by hue, seen vividly !
 Though help from art, use, genius I should claim,
 I could not others to conceive it teach :
 Let them believe, and long to see the same. 45
 And if our thoughts are poor, and dull our speech
 For such high theme, no wonder need there be,
 For ne'er beyond the sun man's eye might reach.
 Such was e'en there the fourth great family
 Of the great Sire who doth its thirst allay, 50
 Showing what "Son" and "Spirit" signify.

or, as in the metaphor of *Conv.* i. 1, the guest at the banquet. The "foretaste" of l. 23 rather points to the latter. We note in l. 27 Dante's consciousness of his calling as the prophet-poet of science as well as theology. Seldom, perhaps, has any one fulfilled (looking to his environment) so entirely as he did, Dr. Westcott's description of the "perfect theologian" as one who "would require to be a perfect scholar, a perfect physicist, and a perfect philosopher" (*Paper on Theological Examinations*).

²⁸ We pass to the sphere of the greater light that rules the day, quickens the world with its heat, and with its light gives the measurement of time. And the season is that from which the sun rises earlier every day, *sc.* the vernal equinox (l. 33), the sun being in Aries. The ascent, as before (*C.* ii. 23, v. 93), had been instantaneous, as are the movements of thought. In this he was in accord with Aquinas, who discusses the question whether the saints in heaven move in time, and answers it in the affirmative ; the time, however, being imperceptible on account of its extreme, infinitesimal brevity (*Summ.* iii. *Supp.* 84, 3).

⁴⁸ The souls in the sun, those of the great theologians, are visible not by features, or even by colour, but only by a brightness which was greater than that of the body of the sun, and words were wanting to describe that brightness.

⁵¹ The two verbs imply the Catholic doctrine of the eternal generation of the Son, the eternal procession of the Spirit, the Father being Himself the "Sun of Angels," and standing in the same relation to the other two Divine Persons as the sun does to the light and heat which issue from it (*Conv.* iii. 12).

Then Beatrice spake : "Give thanks, I say,
 Give thanks unto the Sun of Angels, who
 To this, the Sun of Sense, hath led thy way."
 No heart of man did e'er itself subdue 55
 To worship God in self-surrendering fear,
 With loyalty of will so promptly true,
 As I did when those words fell on mine ear ;
 And so my love in Him was fixed awhile,
 E'en Beatrice, eclipsed, no more seemed near. 60
 She was not wroth thereat, but so did smile,
 That the bright glory of her laughing eyes
 Did my one thought to many things beguile.
 More lights I saw in life and triumph rise,
 And, making us their centre, wreathes us round ; 65
 Less bright their look than sweet their melodies.
 So oft see we Latona's daughter crowned,
 And halo spread, when misty is the air,
 So that it keeps the zone wherewith she's bound.
 In Heaven's high court, whence hither I repair, 70
 Are many gems so beautiful and bright,
 They may not from that realm pass elsewhere.
 Such was the song of those thus clothed with light ;
 Who takes not wings that he may thither fly,
 May wait until the dumb bring news aright. 75
 Then, with sweet songs, those burning suns on high
 Around us wheeled three times in measure due,
 As round fixed poles the stars move equably.
 Dames in unfinished dance I seemed to view,
 Who pause awhile, in silence giving heed, 80
 Till they have learnt the new notes through and through ;

⁶⁰ The adoring gaze is, as it were, an anticipation of the beatific vision and the highest object of human love. Even Beatrice in her idealised character, as impersonating Heavenly Wisdom, suffers a temporary eclipse. The human consciousness, which had been for a moment one with God, is restored to its perception of the plurality of creation by her smile.

⁶⁷ The lunar halo seems to have been a special object of Dante's contemplation (*Purg.* xxix. 78).

⁷³ The jewels of the treasury of Heaven are like those of a king's regalia on earth, which may not be taken out of his kingdom, and such was the song of the blessed spirits in the sun. He who does not soar thither in heart and mind may as well look for speech from the dumb as expect the translation of the untranslatable. One feels in writing the words that they apply to those who follow in Dante's footsteps as well as to himself.

⁷⁷ The threefold circling may be connected with the sacredness of the number as a symbol of the Trinity, or may represent the influence of the Masters of those who know on memory, intellect, and will.

⁷⁹ The image reads like a reminiscence of Dante's youthful days, when he watched the

And within one I heard thus : " When indeed
 The ray of grace, by which is kindled love,
 True love, which still, in loving, love doth breed,
 In thee shall shine all former light above, 85
 So that it guide thee on that ladder high,
 Whence who descends again must upward move,
 Who to thy thirst should from his cup deny
 The wine to quench it, knows not liberty,
 But is like streams that far from ocean die. 90
 Thou would'st fain know what kind of plants they be,
 Thus garlanded, encompassing with praise
 The Lady fair who for Heaven strengtheneth thee.
 I with the flock of holy lambs did graze
 Which Dominic along a pathway led, 95
 Where well he fattens who ne'er vainly strays ;
 Near on the right is he who was my head,
 Master and brother, Albert of Cologne ;
 And I am Thomas, in Aquino bred.
 If 'tis thy wish the others should be shown, 100
 Follow the words I speak with wandering eyes
 Along the blessed wreath in order thrown.

movements of the fair dames of Florence as they danced, halting during a pause in the music to catch up the time of a new melody, to which they then adapted their rhythmic motion. Comp. *Purg.* xxviii. 53, xxxi. 132.

⁸⁵ The speaker is identified in line 99 with Thomas Aquinas. He reads, without a word spoken, the desire that is in Dante's heart, and to gratify that desire is as natural for the spirits that glow with Divine love as for water to flow downwards to the sea. Its very presence is a proof that it shall be satisfied. To be in Paradise, to taste of eternal life, is the foretaste and pledge of ultimate fruition. The theologians gather round Beatrice, for she represents Wisdom, and wisdom is inseparable from a true theology.

⁹⁵ The condition of all growth in the knowledge of Divine things is the soul's withdrawal from the vanities of earth.

⁹⁶ Albert of Cologne (*b.* 1193) was a student at Pavia, and moved by a sermon of Giordano, who succeeded Dominic as General of the Dominican or Preaching Friars, joined the Order in 1223. In 1244 he was at Cologne and had St. Thomas as a pupil. With him he went to Paris in 1248, was elected Provincial of the Order in 1254, and Bishop of Regensburg (Ratisbon) in 1260, and died at Cologne in 1280. In the list of schoolmen he stands as the *Doctor Universalis*. It is probable that Dante had been at Cologne, and may have heard of his fame both there and at Paris (*H.* xxiii. 63).

⁹⁹ Thomas, the *Doctor Angelicus*, *b.* 1227 at Roccasecca, near Monte Cassino, where he received his early education. Thence he went to Naples, where he joined the Dominican Order, and in 1244-48 was with Albert at Cologne and Paris. He was chosen as Master of the Students in the former city, but returned to Paris in 1252, and there became acquainted with Bonaventura. His abstract manner and habit of silent meditation led to his being known as the "dumb ox of Sicily" (Naples = one of the two Sicilies), but Albert prophesied that the bellowing of that ox would echo through the world. Later on we find him at Rome, and once again at Naples. He died on his way to the Council of Lyons in 1274, poisoned, as it was reported, by Charles of Anjou (*Purg.* xx. 69), and was canonised in 1323. Dante appears to have been in his later years a profound student of his works, especially, as the numerous references in these notes will have shown, of the great *Summa Theologiae*.

That other fire-flame from the smile doth rise
 Of Gratian, who each sphere of Law's domain
 So helped that he gives joy in Paradise. 106

The next from whom our choir doth beauty gain
 That Peter was, who, like the widow poor,
 His treasure gave the true Church to sustain.

The fifth light, shining with a beauty pure,
 Breathes from such love that all the world below 110
 Craves to have tidings of him true and sure.

Within it is the lofty mind, where so
 Deep knowledge dwelt, that, if the truth be true,
 Such insight ne'er a second rose to know.

Next may'st thou light of that bright taper view 115
 Which, in the flesh, had fullest insight clear
 Into the angels' life and office due :

And in that little flame that smileth here
 Thou see'st of Christian times the advocate,
 Whose Latin pen was to Augustine dear. 120

¹⁰⁴ The special merit of Gratian, the canonist of Chiusi, was that he undertook the work of reconciling the civil and the canon law. His work, with the title of the *Concordia Discordantium Canonum*, was written about 1150. He taught at Bologna, but is said to have been a monk at Chiassi, near Ravenna, and Dante may thus have had a local reason for giving prominence to his name.

¹⁰⁵ Peter the Lombard, the *Magister Sententiarum*, was born circ. 1100 near Novara, was the son of poor parents, studied at Bologna and Paris, and died in 1164 as Bishop of the latter city. His four *Books of Sentences*, a compendium of the theology of Latin Christendom in the 12th century, became the basis of all works of a like character, notably of the *Summa* of Aquinas. The reference to the widow's mite of *Luke* xxi. 1-4 is from his preface, "*Cupientes aliquid de penuriâ ac tenuitate nostrâ cum pauperculâ in gazophylacium Domini mittere.*" The words that follow, "*Ardus scandere, opus ultra vires nostras agere præsumptimus,*" may well have been in Dante's mind as applicable to his own task.

¹⁰⁶ With the four schoolmen is joined Solomon. Dante answers the question much discussed in the Middle Ages, whether he had been saved, in the affirmative. An elaborate treatise, *De la Salut de Salomon*, will be found in Calmet, *Diction. (art. Salomon)*. The theologians of the Greek Church, headed by Chrysostom, were mostly for a favourable judgment: Augustine and the Latin fathers for an adverse. So in the "Last Judgment" of Oragna in the Strozzi Chapel in Florence and the Campo Santo at Pisa, Solomon appears as rising between the blessed and the lost, almost as if halting between two opinions as to his own destiny. The scale was probably turned in Dante's mind by the mystical interpretation of the *Song of Songs* in St. Bernard and Hugh of St. Victor. The "love" of l. 110 clearly refers to this.

¹¹³ Instead of the name of Solomon we have the description of 1 *Kings* iii. 12, which afterwards (C. xiii. 34-111) becomes the starting-point of a long explanation.

¹¹⁵ The pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite, who, in the traditions of Dante's time, was believed to have been Bishop of Paris, to have suffered martyrdom under Domitian, and to have written a treatise on the "Hierarchy of Angels" which Dante had clearly studied, and which he expounds in C. xxx. and in *Conv.* ii. 6. The writings ascribed to Dionysius belong probably to the 5th century.

¹¹⁹ Who is meant has been matter for conjecture. (1) Ambrose: (2) Paulus Orosius, a priest of Tarragona, who wrote a compendium of universal history of the Bossuet type, *Adversus Paganos*, at the request of Augustine, as a companion volume to the *De Civitate Dei*; and (3) Lactantius, chiefly known by his treatise *De Mortibus Persecutorum*. Of the three guesses, (2) seems most probable. Brunetto's *Treasure*, as far as its history was concerned, was largely based, as indeed was the ancient history of the *Commedia* (*H.* v. 58 π .), on Orosius. Dante names him with Virgil, Ovid, Lucan, Cicero, Livy, as among his favourite authors (*P. E.* ii. 6).

Now if thy mind's eye doth expatiate,
 Following my praises on from light to light,
 The eighth flame thou dost thirst to penetrate.
 In vision of all Good there finds delight
 That holy soul who maketh manifest 125
 The cheating world to him who hears aright;
 The body whence 'twas hunted lies at rest
 In Cieldauro, and from agony
 And exile came it to this region blest.
 Beyond see thou the burning breath-flame high 130
 Of Isidore and Bede, and that Richard,
 With whom in contemplation none might vie.
 He from whom now turns to me thy regard,
 Is of a soul the light so gravely wise,
 It deemed the way to death both slow and hard. 135
 There Sigier's light eternal meets thine eyes,
 Who, lecturing in the street that's named of Straw,
 Unpalatable truths did syllogise."

Butler suggests Victorinus, also a contemporary of Augustine, and mentioned by him as having translated Plato (i. p. 145, *ed. Ben.*); but there are no indications that Dante knew his writings, nor were they at any time as widely read as those of Orosius. Alfred translated the latter, with additions, into Anglo-Saxon.

¹²⁵ All commentators agree that Boethius is meant. The strange vicissitudes of his life (*ib.* 470)—high in favour with Theodoric; Consul in 510; then suspected of plotting against his master; imprisoned at Pavia and then tortured to death—might well point the moral of the vanity of earthly greatness. Dante names him (*Conv.* ii. 13) as one of his chief guides and comforters in the sorrow that fell on him after the death of Beatrice. The Church of St. Peter di Cieldauro (of the Golden Ceiling) at Pavia was his burial-place. The local traditions of that city have canonised him as St. Severino (Gibb. c. 39; Miln. *L. C.* i. 407-414). Boethius also, like Orosius, was translated by Alfred. It is not without interest to note that the same books fashioned the minds of the Florentine poet and the English king.

¹³¹ (1) Isidore, Bishop of Seville (*d.* 636), wrote an encyclopædic book under the title of *Origines seu Etymologiae*, a treatise *De Ecclesiasticis Officiis*, and another, *De Summo Bono*. His works were much studied in all mediæval universities. (2) Bede, known as the Venerable, the Monk of Jarrow, is best known by his *Ecclesiastical History*, but was also a voluminous writer on astronomy, chronology, and other subjects. The fact that the Italian poet places the English historian in Paradise at least falls in with the tradition that he had visited Oxford. Richard, the *Magnus Contemplator*, Prior of the monastery of St. Victor, was one of the great mystical writers of the 12th century (*d.* 1173). His treatises, *De statu interiori*, *Benjamin minor*, *De preparatione animi ad contemplationem*, *Benjamin major*, *De gratia contemplationis*, present so many suggestive parallels with the *Comm.* that *Lub.* (pp. 227-257) has thought it worth while to devote thirty pages of his introduction to printing them in parallel columns. For Hugh of St. Victor see C. xii. 133. Here again the reverence shown for the two great writers of the great monastery at Paris falls in with the tradition that Dante had studied in that city.

¹³⁵ Still more is this the case with Sigier. Here we have at once a local knowledge hardly likely to have been gained elsewhere, and an enthusiastic admiration for one of the least known of the schoolmen. The Street of Straw, *Rue du Foin*, or, in Petrarch's Latin (*Epist. de Sen.* ix. 1), "*Frugosus straminum vicus*," near the Church of St. Julien le Pauvre and the Hôtel de Ville, was the Haymarket of Paris. There the students of the four nations of the Faculty of Arts—(1) France, which included the archbishops of Paris, Sens, Bourges, and Rheims, and also Italy and Spain; (2) England, which included Germany; (3) Normandy; (4) Picardy—met to hear their lectures, seated, in the absence of benches, on the bundles of straw which were ready to their hand (*Lacr.* pp. 4-25). The few facts known as to Sigier are that he was born in the early part of the 13th century near Courtray; that he was

Then, like a clock, that calls us, as by law,
 What time the Bride of God from sleep doth rise, 140
 With matin praise her Bridegroom's love to draw,
 Where the one wheel upon the other flies,
 Sounding "*Ting-ting, ting-ting*," with note so sweet
 That souls attuned feel love's high ecstasies,
 So saw I then that glorious circle fleet 145
 Around, and voice to voice make melody,
 So rich that none may know it as complete
 Save there, where joy endures eternally.

one of the first disciples of Robert Sorbonne, the founder of the college that bears his name; that he taught the philosophy of Aquinas; was Dean of Notre-Dame at Courtray, and was at Paris again in 1255. *Osan* (p. 320) quotes from a document of 1306 the fact that he left a legacy, before 1300, of books, chiefly the writings of Aquinas, for the poor students of the Sorbonne. On the other hand, he was accused of heresy in 1278 before the Dominican Inquisitor, Simon du Val, and acquitted. To that accusation Dante probably refers, not without a touch of fellow-feeling, in the "*invidiosi veri*" of l. 138. Bart. (*P. D.* p. 218) quotes from an Italian paraphrase of the *Roman de la Rose* (published by Castels, Montpellier, 1881), recently discovered, the further statement that Sigier died, after great suffering, to which l. 135 probably refers (comp. *Purg.* xvi. 122), in Orvieto, so that Dante may possibly have met him in Italy as well as Paris. Aroux (p. 232) charges Sigier with following Averroes in teaching a pantheistic materialism, destructive of true thoughts of the personality of man and God, and cites Dante's praise of him as evidence of complicity. The suspicion which was roused against him drifted probably in this direction, but it will be remembered that he was acquitted, and that Dante puts his praises in the mouth of the great opponent of Averroes. He was said to have written a treatise with the title of *Impossibilitas*, in which he at least stated the arguments that might be alleged for Atheism, and this was probably the ground of the suspicion from which he suffered. It is interesting for English readers to remember that he must have been a contemporary of Roger Bacon's at Paris, and that he too was condemned as a heretic in 1278. He was released in 1292, and died at Oxford between that date and 1294 (*Charles*, pp. 37-41). It may be well to note, however, that Mr. Paget Toynbee, in a letter to the *Academy* (xxix. 328), gives evidence to prove that Sigier de Courtrai did not die till 1341 (the passage from the *Roman de la Rose* probably referring to him), and that Dante refers to Sigier of Brabant, who has been confounded with his namesake, and to whom the facts stated by Osanam probably refer. Mr. Toynbee arrives at the conclusion that he was executed in Italy before 1300. See *Additional Notes in Appendix*.

¹³⁹ The comparison with which the *Canto* ends seems drawn from one of the mediæval clocks, of which the Cathedrals of Strasburg and Wells furnish examples, and in which, as the clock struck the hours, figures came forth and wheeled round and round, as in a dance. Such a clock, calling to the Matin lauds, seemed to Dante the nearest approach to the movements of the twelve great students of divine things whom he had enumerated. Dante is said to have been the first writer who mentions a striking clock (*Penny Cycl.* art. *Horology*). Chaucer (*b.* 1328) mentions them as common in England. Speaking of the cock, he says—

"Full sickerer was his crowing in his lege,
 As is a clock, or any abbey orloge."

The date of the Wells clock, made by a monk of Glastonbury (Peter Lightfoot), is said to be the early part of the 14th century. I am indebted to a letter from Lord Grunthorpe, who ranks as an expert in these matters, for the following additional facts: that the invention of clocks of some kind driven by machinery is generally attributed to Pacificus, Archdeacon of Verona, in the 9th century, and also to Gerbert, afterwards Pope Sylvester II., who made a clock at Magdeburg in 996 when Archbishop of that city. One was made for Westminster Abbey in 1263, and another for St. Alban's in 1266. Of none of these, however, is it recorded that they had the circular moving figures which Dante describes, and which I find in our clock at Wells. For another reference to clocks see C. xxiv. 15-18. Froissart (*l.* p. 750) describes a clock of like structure at Dijon (1382). One was sent in 1232 by the Sultan of Egypt to the Emperor Frederick II. See *Appendix*.

CANTO XI.

Life of St. Francis of Assisi, as told by Thomas Aquinas.

INSENSATE care, that haunts each mortal breast,
 How inconclusive are those syllogisms
 Which make thee flutter down to baser rest !
 This man to law turns, that to aphorisms,
 And one the priesthood takes with lower aim, 5
 And one seeks power by force or by sophisms ;
 One seeks the robber's, one the statesman's fame ;
 One, whom the pleasures of the flesh ensnare,
 Sinks back exhausted to inaction tame,
 While I, set free from every clinging care, 10
 With Beatrice in that Heaven on high
 Received, so gloriously am welcomed there.
 And then, when each to that point had passed by
 O' the circle where he was before, he stayed,
 As candle in its stand stays fixedly. 15
 And from within that form, in light arrayed,
 Who spake to me before, now seen more bright
 With smiles and purer, words I heard conveyed :
 " As I in His rays kindle into light,
 So, looking on that light which is eterne, 20
 What stirreth now thy thoughts I read aright.

¹ The opening words seem an echo of *Pers.* i. 1—

" *O curas hominum! O quantum est in rebus inane.*"

The thought of the defective syllogisms that lead the mind to earthly things seems to rise in contrast with the true syllogisms of Sigier, C. x. 138. The term "aphorisms," the title of the great work of Hippocrates (*H.* iv. 143), is used with a technical precision for the studies with which Dante, as a member of the Guild of Physicians and Apothecaries, was familiar.

⁵ The "sophisms" are probably those of the legists of Paris, such as William de Nogaret, who were the counsellors of Philip the Fair in his processes against Boniface VIII. and the Templars (*Purg.* xx. 85-93). So the poet contrasts the serenity of his sojourn in Paradise with the manifold "cares of this world" in which men were engaged below.

¹² The image of the clock (C. x. 139-144) is still before the poet's eyes, as the figures stop when the clock has done striking, each light as in its own candlestick.

¹⁹ St. Thomas speaks again. He reads (as in C. x. 92) in the mirror of the divine knowledge the doubts that are in Dante's mind, and proceeds to solve them, after his manner, with a *distinguo*. The first, turning on C. x. 96, leads to the history of the great Mendicant Orders and their founders, whom Providence had raised up (ll. 28-36) to guide the Church into true paths of peace and joy. Starting from the teaching of *Swmm.* i. 63, 7, St. Francis represents the Seraphim, that excel in love; St. Dominic, the Cherubim, that excel in knowledge. To praise one is to praise also the other; but Aquinas, himself a Dominican, in the true spirit of brotherhood, prefers to tell the story of St. Francis. As we follow that story it will be well to remember that Dante had probably been with Giotto at Assisi, guiding him in his designs for the great Franciscan church there (*Lindsay*, ii. 28-48).

Thou doubttest, and dost wish my speech should turn
 To words so open and intelligent
 That to thy sense it should be plain to learn
 What, when I said 'he fattens well,' I meant, 25
 And when I said 'no second e'er arose ;'
 And here we must distinguish each intent.
 The Providence,—which all things doth dispose
 With such deep counsels that all mortal gaze
 Is baffled ere to that great depth it goes— 30
 That unto Him she loves might bend her ways
 The Bride of Him who, with a bitter cry,
 Espoused her with the blood we bless and praise,
 In fuller peace, more steadfast loyalty,—
 Her, for her good, with two high chiefs endowed, 35
 That they on either side her guides might be.
 The soul of one with love seraphic glowed ;
 The other by his wisdom on our earth
 A splendour of cherubic glory showed.
 Of one I'll speak ; for, if we tell the worth 40
 Of one, 'tis true of both, whiche'er we take,
 For to one end each laboured from his birth.
 Between Tupino and the streams that break
 From the hill chosen by Ubaldo blest,
 A lofty mount a fertile slope doth make ; 45
 Perugia's Sun-gate from that lofty crest
 Feels heat and cold ; Nocera and Gualdo pine
 Behind it, by their heavy yoke oppress.
 On this slope, where less steeply doth incline
 The hill, was born into this world a sun, 50
 Bright as this orb doth oft o'er Ganges shine.

⁴⁰ The Tupino, a stream which rises in the Apennines, and passing by Nocera and Foligno (memorable for the first edition of the *Commedia*, printed there in 1472), flows into the Tiber. The description in its opening, as throughout, gives evidence of direct local knowledge. The other stream is the Chiascio, flowing from a hill on which St. Ubaldo had lived as a hermit before he became Bishop of Gubbio. The hill is that known as Subasio, on the slope of which stands Assisi, equidistant from the two rivers just named. The road from Perugia to Assisi passes through the Porta Sole, and is exposed in winter to the cold blasts from the hills, and in summer to the scorching reflection of the sun. Dante had obviously felt both extremes when he was at Assisi with Giotto. I can testify to the cold of the Porta Sole on a windy day in February. The "grievous yoke" of Nocera and Gualdo may refer to their oppression by the kings of Naples, or more probably by the Guelphs of Perugia. Benvenuto, however, takes the "yoke" as referring to the mountain ridge and the cold and storms which it brought on the two cities.

⁴⁵ After the full description of Assisi we have the birth of St. Francis (1182). Dante begins the life in almost the same terms as Thomas of Celano, "*Quasi sol oriens in mundo*." So

Whence, naming this spot, let not any one
 Call it 'Ascesi'—that were tame in sense ;—
 As 'Orient' doth its proper title run.
 Such was his rise, nor was he far from thence, 55
 When he began to make the wide earth share
 Some comfort from his glorious excellence ;
 For he, a youth, his father's wrath did dare
 For maid, for whom not one of all the crowd,
 As she were death, would pleasure's gates unbar. 60
 And then before court spiritual he vowed,
Et coram patre—marriage-pledge to her,
 And day by day more fervent love he showed.
 Of her first spouse bereaved, a thousand were,
 And more, the years she lived, despised, obscure, 65
 And, till he came, none did his suit prefer.
 Nought it availed that she was found secure
 With that Amyclas when the voice was heard
 Which made the world great terror-pangs endure ;
 Nought it availed that she nor shrank nor feared, 70
 So that, when Mary tarried yet below,
 She on the Cross above with Christ appeared.

Bonaventura sees in him the fulfilment of *Rev.* vii. 2. The "Ganges" may have been suggested by the claims of rhyme, but from Dante's geographical standpoint, as the eastern boundary of the land hemisphere, it marked the first region in which the sun's beams fell on the habitable world, its true birthplace. It may be, too, that he had heard from Marco Polo or other travellers of the glory of an Eastern dawn. *Comp. Purg.* ii. 5, xxvii. 4. Such a "day-spring from on high" had come upon those who were in darkness and the shadow of death, and Assisi (I keep in the text the old form, with its allusive meaning, used by Dante) had become the true Orient of Christendom.

⁵⁵ Francis, the son of Pietro di Bernardone, a merchant of Assisi, followed his father's calling in early life, was taken prisoner in a battle between the citizens of Assisi and those of Perugia, and on his release began to feel the calling to a higher life, which should reproduce the poverty and the lowliness of Christ. The call came to him as he heard *Matt.* x. read as the Gospel of the day in the church of the Portiuncula. For the bride whom he then chose, Poverty, from whom most men shrink as from death itself, he incurred his father's wrath, and in his presence, and in that of the Bishop of Assisi, solemnly renounced, as in his espousals with her, all worldly possessions. Giotto's frescoes in the church at Assisi, probably suggested by Dante himself, perpetuate the memory of that marriage. The Latin phrase is introduced as part of the formula of the solemn covenant.

⁶⁴ The first husband of Poverty had been the Christ (*Luke* ix. 58 ; *2 Cor.* viii. 9). The marriage with her second spouse, St. Francis, was in 1207.

⁶⁵ As elsewhere, memories of Lucan (v. 519-532) mingle with those of Scripture. Amyclas is the poor fisherman on the shore of the Adriatic who received Cæsar in his cottage, and, secure in his poverty, felt no touch of fear.

*"O vite tuta facultas
 Pauperis angustique laræ ! O munera nondum
 Intellecta Deum."*

Dante quotes the passage in *Conv.* iv. 13.

⁷² The *Mater Dolorosa* stood by the cross, but as the Crucified One hung there, naked and bleeding, Poverty also was with Him.

But lest I tell it too obscurely so,
 By these two lovers, in my speech diffuse,
 Thou Poverty and Francis now may'st know. 75
 Their concord and their looks of joy profuse,
 The love, the wonder, and the aspect sweet,
 Made men in holy meditation muse;
 So that the holy Bernard bared his feet,
 The first to start, and for such peace so tried, 80
 That slow he thought his pace, though it was fleet.
 O wealth unknown, true good that doth abide!
 Ægidius bared his feet, Sylvester too,
 Following the Bridegroom, so they loved the Bride.
 Then went that Father and that Master true 85
 With that his Bride and that his family,
 Who round their loins the lowly girdle drew;
 Nor was faint heart betrayed in downcast eye,
 As being Pietro Bernardone's son,
 Nor yet as one despised wondrously; 90
 But like a king his stern intention
 To Innocent he opened, who did give
 The first seal to that new religion.
 Then, when the race content as poor to live
 Grew behind him, whose life, so high renowned, 95
 Would, in Heaven's glory, higher songs receive,
 With a new diadem once more was crowned
 By Pope Honorius, from on high inspired,
 This Archimandrite's purpose, holy found.

⁷⁵ The joy of the bridegroom and the bride thus strangely brought together attracted others. Bernardo of Quintavalle was the first to join the Order; Ægidius, author of the *Verba Aurea* (d. at Perugia, 1272), the third. The second, Piero, is not named. Sylvester, the fourth, had sold some stones to St. Francis for his new church, and when he saw him distributing the money which Bernardo had given for the poor, reminded him that he had not paid for them. Francis met his demand with a handful of money, and Sylvester went home, and before long offered himself as a member of the brotherhood.

⁸⁵ St. Francis went with his eleven disciples, and with the Rule of his Order, the *Magna charta paupertatis*, to Rome, and obtained the approval of Innocent III. The same word is used for the cord of the Order as in *H.* xxvii. 92. One may note, as a matter of local interest for Dante, that the Church of Santa Croce at Florence was connected with the Franciscan Order.

⁹⁰ Not without a natural sympathy, and possibly also with a reminiscence of Amyclas, Dante notes the kingly bearing of St. Francis before the Pope, in spite of his lowly origin and the scorn to which his rule of life exposed him.

⁹⁵ Honorius III. solemnly sanctioned the Order in 1223.

⁹⁶ Archimandrite = chief of a sheepfold, was the word used in the Greek Church for the head of a monastery. It had been used by Pope Leo the Great, and may have survived in some of the monasteries of Southern Italy (Suicer. *Thes.* s. v.)

And after that, with martyr zeal untired, 100
 He, in the presence of the Soldan proud
 Preached Christ, and those whom His example fired ;
 And finding that that race no ripeness showed
 For their conversion, not to toil in vain,
 He to Italia's fields his labours vowed. 105
 On the rough rock 'twixt Tiber's, Arno's, plain,
 From Christ received he the last seal's impress,
 Which he two years did in his limbs sustain.
 When it pleased Him, who chose him thus to bless,
 To lead him up the high reward to share 110
 Which he had merited by lowliness,
 Then to his brothers, each as rightful heir,
 He gave in charge his lady-love most dear,
 And bade them love her with a steadfast care ;
 And from her breast that soul so high and clear 115
 Would fain depart and to its kingdom turn,
 Nor for his body sought another bier.
 Think now what he was who the fame did earn
 To be his comrade, and for Peter's barque
 On the high seas the true path to discern. 120
 And such was he, our honoured Patriarch ;
 Wherefore, who follows him as he commands,
 Him laden with rich treasures thou may'st mark.
 But now his flock so eagerly demands
 New food, that it, of sheer necessity, 125
 In pastures widely different strays and stands.

¹⁰⁰ Dante follows the tradition that St. Francis, after sending forth his disciples two and two to preach the Gospel to the nations (1212), started for Acre, where he preached Christ to the Sultan. The whole series of events here related may be seen in the frescoes of the Franciscan convent at Orta, at Assisi, and in the Chapel of Santa Croce, Florence.

¹⁰⁶ The rock is that of Alvernia, where St. Francis founded an oratory in 1215, and where, according to tradition, two years before his death, in 1226, he received the *stigmata* as the crowning seal of his mission, concealing them from the eyes of men, so that they were scarcely known by any till after his death.

¹¹³ Poverty, as the lady he had loved and wedded, he left to the care of his brethren. From her bosom he departed to his reward, and desired no funeral honours but those which she could give him.

¹¹⁸ We are again reminded of Giotto, who painted his famous "Navicella" probably when he was at Rome in 1295-1300. Dante may have seen it either in his jubilee visit or in his later embassy (*Lindsay*, ii. 9). The mosaic from the painting, originally in the choir of the old basilica, is now seen in the portico of St. Peter's. The "patriarch" of whom Aquinas speaks is Dominic, the founder of his own Order.

¹²⁴ The "new food" may be either the wealth, dignity, and fame which the degenerate Dominicans were seeking, or the new and more secular studies for which they were forsaking those by which their great teachers had risen to eminence. In the "milk" there is probably

And as the more his sheep thus scattered lie,
 And further from him wander to and fro,
 With less milk come they for the fold's supply.
 Some are there who, in fear of that loss, go 130
 Back to their shepherd, but so few they be,
 That little cloth would make them cowls, I trow.
 Now, if my words are not obscure to thee,
 If thine own ears have been to learn intent,
 If what I said thou call'st to memory, 135
 In part at least thy wish shall find content;
 For thou shalt see the plant which thus decays,
 Shalt see what he, the leather-girded, meant
 By 'well he fattens who ne'er vainly strays.'

CANTO XII.

The Life of St. Dominic as told by St. Bonaventura.

As soon as that last word had spoken been
 By that blest flame who gave it utterance,
 That holy mill to wheel again was seen ;
 Nor did it wholly through one whirl advance,
 Before another compassed it around, 5
 With song to song conformed, and dance to dance,—
 Song which above our Muse doth so redound,
 Above our Sirens, in those organs sweet,
 As primal ray above the ray's rebound.

an allusion to 1 *Cor.* iii. 2 ; 1 *Pet.* ii. 2. The new pursuits of the Order had marred the simplicity and effectiveness of their work as preachers. There were some who retained the older and better spirit, but *quotusquisque reliquus?* Comp. Roger Bacon's complaint of a like degeneracy among both Dominicans and Franciscans (*Op. Tert.* c. 65).

¹³⁰ I take the readings *vedrai*, and not *vedra* ; *correggier*, and not "*corregger*" (= correction). The Dominicans wore a leathern girdle, as distinguished from the "cord" of St. Francis. They were *correggieri* as the Franciscans were *cordellieri* (*H.* xxvii. 67). What had been said to Dante would explain the meaning of the words (*C.* x. 96) that had perplexed him.

⁵ Another circle of twelve blessed spirits gathers round the first, Dante and Beatrice still remaining in the centre, and moves with rhythmic dance and song. So, the observer of nature notes, we see two rainbows (Iris = the messenger of Juno), one (by a bold transfer of imagery from sight to sound), the echo of the other. For the story of Echo, see *Met.* iii. 395. The forsaken nymph fades away in her sorrow, and nothing is left of her but her voice.

As oft our eyes through floating cloud-mists meet 10
 Two rainbows parallel and like in hue,
 When Juno bids her handmaid ply swift feet,
 The outer from the inner born to view,
 Like to the speech of that poor wandering one
 Whom Love consumed as hot sun doth the dew ; 15
 And thus they lead man's thoughts forecasting on,
 By reason of God's pact with Noah made,
 That earth no more shall be with flood o'errun ;
 So of such roses bright as never fade
 There circled round us those fair garlands twain, 20
 The inner in the outer re-portrayed.
 Now when the dance and all the festal strain,
 Both of the music and the radiant flame,
 Of joyous love-lights all at once refrain,
 Instant and impulse for them all the same, 25
 Just as the eyes, which, when the will invites,
 Or shut or open with a single aim,
 Then, from the heart of one of those new lights,
 There came a voice which made me turn to see,
 E'en as the star the needle's course incites. 30
 And it began : " The love which shines in me
 Draws me to name that other Leader great,
 Through whom my Master gains such eulogy.
 'Tis meet that each should share the other's fate,
 That, as they fought together side by side, 35
 Together we their fame should celebrate.

¹⁶ The thought seems to be that when men see the rainbow they remember *Gen.* ix. 8-17, and have a forecast of better things than the plague of waters.

²⁰ The thought of the rose-garland of souls, of which we have the first fruits here, culminates in the grand vision of C. xxxi. 1-24.

³⁰ The allusion to the mariner's compass is worth noting, like the mention of the clock in C. x. 139, as showing Dante's interest in applied science. Marco Polo is said to have brought back a knowledge of the properties of the magnetic needle from Cathay. It is described by Guyot de Provins in a satiric poem called *Le Bible* in 1190. On the other hand, Vincent de Beauvais and Cardinal de Vitry speak of it as a marvel which they had seen in the East, and there is no evidence of its having been used for nautical purposes. Guido Guinicelli, Dante's master (*Purg.* xxvi. 97), alludes to it in nearly the same terms as Dante (*Rime Ant.* p. 295). The fact that Roger Bacon dwells on it as a "*miraculum in parte notum*" (*Op. Min.* p. 383) indicates a possible source of Dante's knowledge (C. ii. 64-148 n.)

³¹ The speaker is Bonaventura (*d.* 1274), General of the Franciscan Order, who, in return for the story of St. Francis told by Aquinas, narrates the life of St. Dominic. Both had fought together; both should be united in men's honour. Sometimes the one, sometimes the other, appear in old Italian paintings, engaged in the act of prepping up the falling edifice of the Church. Comp. l. 106.

The host of Christ so dearly re-supplied
 With armour, in the rear of its high sign
 Was following, few and slow, by doubt sore tried,
 When the great Emperor of the realm divine 40
 Was moved for that imperilled band to care,
 Not for its merits, but through grace benign ;
 And help, as I have said, to His Spouse bare
 By those two champions, through whose words and deeds
 The scattered people homeward 'gan repair. 45
 In that fair clime whence zephyr soft proceeds
 The young and tender leaves to open wide,
 With which our Europe clothes its verdant meads,
 Not far off from the surgings of the tide,
 Behind which, when its heat is long and great, 50
 The sun at times from sight of all doth hide,
 There Calaroga stands, the fortunate,
 Beneath the shelter of the mighty shield,
 Where lions subject are, and subjugate.
 Therein the zealous lover was revealed 55
 Of Christ's true faith, the athlete consecrate,
 Kind to her friends, to those who hate her steeled.
 His mind, when it the Maker did create,
 Was with that living energy replete,
 It made his mother prophet of his fate ; 60

³⁸ The re-arming of the host of Christ is identical with their redemption and renewal. They had lost through sin the weapons of the armoury of light (*Eph.* vi. 11-17), and Christ came to equip His soldiers with them. The description that follows gives us Dante's view of the state of Western Christendom at the beginning of the 13th century—heresy rampant, epicurean unbelief creeping in (*H.* x. 32, 63 *ss.*), prelates and priests tainted with simony (*H.* xix. 1-6) and leading corrupt lives (*H.* xv. 109-113), and the champions of the faith few and far between.

⁴⁰ We note the recurrence of the name Emperor, used in *H.* i. 104. It appears once more in *C.* xxv. 41.

⁴⁵ Spain is described as the region from which the zephyr blows. St. Dominic was born at Calaroga in Castile, near the sources of the Ebro and the Tagus (now Calahorra), about eighty miles from the shores of the Bay of Biscay. The "sometimes" is a note of accuracy. It was in the summer that the sun seemed, after its long journey from the east, to sink in the waters of the Atlantic beyond Calaroga. The description is perhaps not without a touch of symbolism. The Church was to be awakened out of the "winter of its discontent" by the Saint who came from the land of the zephyrs. Comp. a like analogy in *C.* xi. 54.

⁵⁵ As in *H.* xvii. 55-75, Dante displays his knowledge of heraldry by describing the arms of Castile, in which two lions and two castles are quartered in normal fashion.

⁵⁸ The word for "lover" is the same as that used in *malam parlem* of the giant who wooed the harlot in *Purg.* xxxii. 155. Diez (p. 128) derives it from Germ. *truu*, the true servant or lover. Dominici *b.* 1170.

⁶⁰ Apparently an echo of *Æn.* vi. 854—

"Parcere subjectis et debellare superbis."

⁶² The legend was that his mother dreamt that she was to give birth to a dog with a

And soon as the espousals were complete,
 Which at the font did him to true faith wed,
 Where dower of blessing equal dower did meet,
 The lady, who for him that promise said,
 Saw in her dreams the issue wondrous rare, 65
 Destined from him and from his heirs to spread.
 And that the words his calling should declare,
 A spirit went from hence the boy to name,
 Named after Him, who all his soul did share.
 He Dominic was called, and his the fame, 70
 As of the tiller of the ground, whom Christ
 Chose as His help His garden to reclaim.
 Servant and envoy was he seen of Christ ;
 For the first love which in his soul found home,
 Was for the first great counsel given by Christ. 75
 Silent and wakeful oft in midnight's gloom,
 He by his nurse was seen upon the ground,
 As though he said, 'To this end have I come.'
 O father ! Felix both in fact and sound !
 O mother ! true Joanna in thy deed, 80
 If that name means what in it men have found !

burning torch in its mouth ; that, troubled by the vision, she went for comfort to the shrine of an earlier St. Dominic near her home, and on the birth of her son called him by the same name. A trace of the legend survived in the mediæval pun that the Dominicans were *Domini Canes*.

⁶¹ The espousals of St. Francis were celebrated when he was of full age, with Poverty. Those of Dominic, as the great champion of the faith, from which he never swerved, were celebrated at his baptism.

⁶⁴ The godmother of Dominic also had her dream, and saw one star on the child's forehead, and another on the nape of his neck, in token that he was to illuminate both East and West (*Benév.*)

⁷⁰ The words probably refer to Aquinas (*Summ.* iii. 16, 3), who gives the meaning of *Dominicus* as meaning "one who belongs altogether to the *Dominus*." The man Christ Jesus, he argues, is Himself the Lord, and therefore cannot be rightly called *Dominicus*, but his flesh may be called *caro dominica*.

⁷¹ It is Dante's rule that Christ should never be combined with any other word as rhyme. Comp. C. xiv. 104, xix. 104, xxxii. 83. Like instances of the same word thrice repeated for the sake of emphasis are found in the *vidi* of C. xxx. 95 and in the *ammenda* of *Purg.* xx. 65.

⁷⁵ The word "counsel" is used in its strict ethical sense, as contrasted with "precept" (*Summ.* i. 2. 108, 4), as not binding upon all men, and with special reference to the command of *Matt.* xix. 21 given to the rich young ruler. The Order of the Preachers, like that of the *Fratres Minores*, was to be an Order of Mendicants. In the traditions of the Saint's life, Dominic sold even his books that he might relieve the poor in a time of famine, and offered to sell himself that he might ransom a captive from the Moors.

⁷⁷ Often in his childhood the boy was found at midnight kneeling on the hard ground, and when his nurse remonstrated, answered in the words which Dante puts into his mouth.

⁷⁹ Dominic's father was Felix Guzman. Dante knows enough of Hebrew to give the etymology of Giovanni (Joannes = Jochanan = the Lord is gracious), but a Hebrew scholar would hardly have spoken in the half-doubting tone of l. 81. Comp. Witte, *D. F.* ii. 43. An interesting paper on *Immanuel and Dante* in *D. Gesell.* iii. 423-462 shows that Dante was acquainted with an eminent Jewish poet and scholar. Comp. C. vii. 1-3 ; vol. i. p. lxxvi.

Not as men labour now, for worldly greed,
 Following the Ostian, or Taddeo's fame,
 But for that Manna which is food indeed,
 In little time great doctor he became, 85
 So that he gave himself to tend the vine,
 Which withers if the dresser merits blame :
 And from the See, less now than then benign
 To the honest poor, not through its own offence,
 But his who sits there in degenerate line ; 90
 Not that he might with payment full dispense,
 Nor yet reversion of first vacant see,
 Nor tithes, which are of God's own poor the pence,
 Did he demand, but only liberty
 Against the erring world for that seed true 95
 To fight, whose plants twice twelve encompass thee.
 With will and doctrine then himself he threw
 In Apostolic office to proceed,
 Like torrent which its streams from high source drew ;

⁸⁵ The Ostian is Henry of Susa, Archbishop of Embrun, who was made Cardinal of Ostia in 1261 and died 1271. He wrote a commentary on the Decretals, and is here taken as the representative of those who gave themselves to such studies. Taddeo is named in most MS. of the *Conv.* (ii. 10) as having translated the *Ethics* of Aristotle into Italian. He is said to have been of Florence (or Bologna), to have been a student of Hippocrates and Galen, and a personal friend of Dante's (*Berv.*), and to have died in 1295. Dante's medical studies as a member of the Guild of Apothecaries would naturally bring him into contact with such a man (*H.* iv. 143), and he appears here as their representative, as the Ostian is of Canon Law. The name appears as a surname in *Vitt.* xii. 18. Some of the older commentators, however, identify him with Taddeo Pepoli, a jurisconsult of Bologna, and therefore group him with the Ostian. In either case, what is meant is that Dominic abandoned secular studies for the true "manna" of heavenly wisdom.

⁸⁶ The words imply a survey, almost a visitation, of the Church as the vineyard of the Lord (*Isai.* v. 4; *Jer.* ii. 21; *Matt.* xx. 1-16). It is noticeable that the same word is used here for the withering of the vine as had been used in *H.* ii. 128 for the revival of drooping flowers, the whiteness being in one case that of the fading leaf, in the other of the opening blossom.

⁸⁷ The See is that of Rome; the degenerate occupant of that See at the date of Dante's vision was Boniface VIII.

⁸⁸ The three applications which are scornfully noted as commonly made to the Pope are (1) for a dispensation from full payment of what was due, either as the fulfilment of a contract or by way of restitution, so that there might be an abatement of 50 or even 66 per cent.; (2) the promise of appointment to the first bishopric or other dignity that might become vacant—a power largely exercised by Popes Boniface VIII. and Clement V. in the case of cathedrals and the like, even in England (*Wells Historical MSS.* pp. 75, 81); (3) an assignment, for their personal use, of the tithes which were rightfully the inheritance of the poor.

⁸⁹ The four-and-twenty plants are obviously (though most of the older commentators take them as the four-and-twenty elders in *Purg.* xxix. 82 for the canonical books of the Old Testament) the two circles of Dominican and Franciscan teachers by whom the poet is now surrounded.

⁹⁰ Dominic obtained the sanction of Innocent III. in 1215, and proceeded, with the sanction of Honorius III. in 1216, to the persecution of the Albigenses in Provence, and specially in Toulouse, calling in the secular arm of Simon de Montfort. For the horrors of that persecution see Milm. *L. C.* vi. 8-22. The watering of the Catholic garden points to the labours of the Dominican Order as preachers and theologians. Dominic himself died August 6, 1221.

And so upon the heretics' false breed 100
 He fiercely swept, most vehemently there,
 Where rebel will did most his course impede.
 Full many streams from him their waters bare
 The garden Catholic to irrigate,
 So that its plants more living might appear. 105
 If such was one wheel of the car where late
 The holy Church found stronghold to defend,
 And proved in civil strife inviolate,
 Then should thy spirit clearly apprehend
 The goodness of the other, in whose cause 110
 Thomas, ere I came, proved so kind a friend.
 But now the wheel no more its circuit draws
 O'er the same track, neglected and unloved ;
 And mould is seen where wine's crust won applause.
 His brotherhood, that once straight onward moved 115
 And in his footsteps trod, now turns so far
 That what was foremost now is hindmost proved ;
 And soon it will be seen what harvests are
 Of that bad culture gathered, when the tares
 Shall mourn the sentence that the barn doth bar. 120
 I say that one who, leaf by leaf, compares
 Our book, will find some pages where 'tis writ—
 'As I was wont to be, so life still fares ;'

¹⁰⁷ The chariot of the Church reminds us of the imagery of *Purg.* xxix. 107. Here, however, it is a two-wheeled chariot, and the two wheels are Dominic and Francis and the Orders they respectively represented.

¹¹⁵ As Aquinas had noted the degeneracy of the Dominicans, so does Bonaventura that of the Franciscans, which is described in four similitudes. The track of the wheels of its highest point, *i.e.*, the life of its founder, is no longer followed. The good wine has turned sour, and there is the mould of decay instead of the crust of ripeness. The words are said to have been proverbial, "Good wine shows crust, bad wine mould." The third comparison is that they place their heel where St. Francis and his companions had placed the point of their feet, *i.e.*, their course was retrograde ; the fourth, that the tares have taken the place of the wheat.

¹²⁰ The words probably refer to the events which, when Dante wrote, were fresh in men's memories. In 1254 Celestine V. during his short pontificate had endeavoured to heal the divisions between the "Spiritual" Franciscans, who claimed to tread in the footsteps of their founder, and the main body of the Order, by gathering the former into a new Order as the Poor Hermits of Celestine. Boniface VIII. abolished the Order in 1302, and persecuted its members as heretical. They were thus thrust out of the Church, and as the "Fratricelli," taking the "*Everlasting Gospel*" of the Abbot Joachim as their standard, became the *little white* of orthodox theologians, and were condemned by two Bulls of John XXII. in 1317-18, probably, *i.e.*, just before Dante wrote the *Paradiso*. They complained that the ark of Christ's Church (this seems to me a more natural rendering than the "store-chest" of Butler (comp. C. xx. 39), though there may be an allusion to both meanings) had been taken from them (*Milm. L. C.* vii. 91, 345).

¹²⁵ The volume is the register of the Order, the leaves are the individual members.

¹²⁶ Ubertino of Casale was the head of the Spiritual Franciscans, and as such enforced the rules of the Order with the extremest rigour. Matteo, Cardinal of Acquasparta, and General

But not Casal' or Acquasparta it
 Produces ; when these men our law apply, 125
 This narrowing rules, that doth, too lax, acquit.
 Bonaventura's life and soul am I,
 Of Bagnoregio, who each left-hand care
 Placed ever far below his office high ;
 Illuminato, Augustine, are there, 130
 First of those poor bare-footed mendicants,
 Who in their girdle-cord God's friendship share.
 Hugh of St. Victor near them doth advance ;
 Peter Mangiador, and he of Spain,
 Who through twelve volumes full of light descants ; 135
 Nathan the seer ; the Metropolitan,
 Chrysostom ; Anselm, and Donatus too,
 Who our first art to teach did not disdain ;
 Rabanus too is there, and, full in view,
 Shines the Calabrian Abbot Joachim, 140
 Whom the prophetic spirit did imbue.

of the Order, took a more liberal view, and, from Dante's point of view, encouraged a dangerous laxity. The poet had probably seen him when he came to Florence in 1300 as a legate from Boniface VIII. (*Vill.* viii. 40, 49).

¹²⁸ Assuming, as I do, the good faith of Dante, the list that follows has the interest of showing whom, among the Franciscans, he most delighted to honour. (1) Bonaventura himself, the *Doctor Seraphicus*, b. 1221 at Bagnoregio, near the lake of Bolsena, joined the Order 1243, General in 1256, Cardinal and Bishop of Albano in 1272, d. at Lyons 1274, canonised by Sixtus V. in 1482. As the epithet attached to his name implies, Bonaventura represented the emotional, mystical side of mediæval thought, rather than the logical. He lectured at Paris on the *Sentences* of Lombard. Aquinas, on finding him writing the *Life of St. Francis*, is said to have exclaimed, "*Sinamus sanctum de sancto scribere*." For "left-hand" see *Prov.* iii. 16.

¹³¹ Illuminatus of Rieti was one of the earliest followers of St. Francis, and went with him to Egypt. Augustine was another. It is related of him that being ill at the time of St. Francis's death, he called out and begged the Saint to wait for him and then fell asleep.

¹³⁴ Hugh of St. Victor, b. 1097 at Ypres(?) or Blankenberg(?), entered the monastery of Hamersleben and then removed to that of St. Victor at Paris, from which he takes his name. Aquinas (*Summ.* I. 2. 5, 1) speaks in the highest terms of his writings (*De Sacramentis* and others), which fill three folio volumes. Pietro Mangiador (*the Eater*; was he so called as a *hellus librorum* ?), b. at Troyes in Champagne, was Chancellor of the University of Paris in 1164, and d. 1179 in the monastery of St. Victor. Peter of Spain (*i.e.*, of Lisbon), b. 1226, first a physician, then a priest, Cardinal Bishop of Tusculum, and elected to the Papacy as John XXI. in 1276 (d. 1277), is noticeable as the only Pope whom Dante places in Paradise. The twelve books of I. 136 were on Logic. The famous "*Barbara, celarent*," is ascribed to him (*Phil.*)

¹³⁷ By a strange grouping, for which it is difficult to give any satisfactory explanation, we pass to the more famous names of the prophet who rebuked David, the Patriarch who was exiled for rebuking the Empress Eudoxia, and the Archbishop who was exiled for rebuking William Rufus (was this the link that connected them together in Dante's mind ?), Donatus, who is only known as the friend of St. Jerome and the author of the Latin Grammar used in all mediæval schools, so that a "Donat" became a synonym for a lesson-book. Here we may perhaps allow something for the imperative urgency of rhyme.

¹³⁹ Rabanus Maurus, b. at Mayence 776, and trained in the Abbey of Fulda, became Abbot in 822 and Archbishop of Mayence in 847, d. 856. He was the pupil of Alcuin, the master of Walafrid Strabo, wrote many commentaries on Scripture, and other works, historical and linguistic, after the manner of the time. One may perhaps speak of him as the Beda of Germany. Curiously enough all the early commentaries on the *Commedia* speak of him as Beda's brother.

¹⁴⁰ The strange list ends with the Abbot Joachim of the Cistercian monastery of Flora in

To celebrate so great a paladin
 I was stirred up by that warm courtesy
 Of brother Thomas, backed by words that win,
 And with me too was stirred this company." 145

CANTO XIII.

The Mysteries of Human Birth and of the Incarnation—The Wisdom of Solomon.

LET him imagine, who to know doth long
 That which I saw, and let the picture stay
 While I am speaking, fixed as mountain strong,
 Stars ten and five, which in the heavens display,
 In different regions, light so wondrous clear 5
 That densest air is conquered by its ray ;
 Let him imagine then the Wain appear,
 For which our heaven sufficeth day and night,
 So that to turn its pole it fails not there ;
 Imagine then the horn with opening bright, 10
 That from the point starts of that axle-tree
 Round which the primal wheel revolves aright,
 Had made two signs in Heaven for man to see,
 Like that which Minos' daughter made of old,
 Then when she felt death's chill and ceased to be ; 15

Calabria (*ib.* 1130). He was conspicuous as a commentator on the Apocalypse, predicting the coming of Antichrist in 1260. He was said to have foretold the failure of the third crusade to Richard I. and Philip II. on the ground that the time had not yet come. After his death he was on the one side received as a saint and prophet, inaugurating the new period of the Church's history, in which she was to be under the immediate guidance of the Spirit, and, on the other, denounced as a heretic. A book known as the *Everlasting Gospel*, and believed to embody his revelations, was the rallying-point of the seceding Spiritual Franciscans known as the Fraticelli, and as such was condemned, explicitly or implicitly, by Boniface VIII. Dante without being prepared *jurare in verba magistri* clearly sympathised with him, probably all the more because he had been so condemned (*Milm. L. C.* vii. 347). It is noticeable, as pointing probably to Dante's influence with the Order, that the stricter Franciscans appear after his death as strong Ghibellines (*Ibid.* vii. 378).

¹ The mystic dance of the two companies of saints is described in one of Dante's most elaborate displays of astronomical knowledge. Take fifteen stars of the first magnitude (the exact number of such stars in the Ptolemaic register), the Wain or Great Bear with its seven stars, that never leave the northern hemisphere, the two bright stars at the base of Ursa Minor (here pictured as a horn), which begins from the pole-star, the point of the axis round which the *Primum Mobile* revolves ; picture these arranged in two concentric circles, as in the constellation of Ariadne, whose crown of flowers was turned by Bacchus into a group of stars (the *Gnosia corona* of *Georg.* i. 222 ; *Met.* viii. 174-182), revolving in the same direction, and then we shall have a picture like that which met Dante's gaze as he looked on the two companies of theologians.

And each of them round each its rays to fold,
 And both go whirling onward in such mode
 That one went first, the other, following, rolled;
 Then will some shadow faint to him be showed
 Of that true constellation, and the dance 20
 Twofold that circled round me where I stood;
 For it excels all wonted circumstance,
 Far as outspeeds Chiana's sluggish flow
 The highest heaven's revolving radiance.
 No Pæan nor "Io Bacche" sang they so, 25
 But Persons Three who in one Nature shine,
 And in one Person that in manhood show.
 The song and dance each measured out its line,
 And then those holy lights to us gave heed,
 Joy growing, as they task with task combine. 30
 At last the hush of saints in will agreed
 Was broken by the light from which I knew
 Of God's poor saint the wondrous life and deed.
 It said: "One sheaf being threshed in measure due,
 Now that the garner hath received the grain, 35
 Love leads me on to thresh the other too.
 Thou deem'st that in the breast from which was ta'en
 The rib to form that cheek so wondrous fair,
 Whose tasting wrought the world such bitter pain,
 And in that other, piercèd by the spear, 40
 Which past and future so did satisfy,
 That it outweighs all guilt that man doth bear,
 Whate'er of light in our humanity
 Is possible, was poured on each of those
 By Him who fashioned both so gloriously. 45

²⁰ The Chiana (*H.* xxix. 47), now turned into a canal, flows towards the Northern Arno near Arezzo. In Dante's time its course was southward, and it flowed into the Tiber near Orvieto. As the most sluggish of Italian rivers, it is contrasted with the velocity of the *Primum Mobile*. As this surpassed that, so did the brightness of the constellation which Dante saw surpass any imagined grouping of the stars of heaven. And the hymn they sang was not such as had been heard in the festivals of Bacchus or Apollo, which the name of Ariadne suggested, but praised the ever-blessed Three in One and One in Three. Was Dante thinking of the *Quicunque vult* as sung in Paradise, and as summing up the teaching of Aquinas and Bonaventura, or did his thoughts rest on the more familiar *Gloria Patri*?

²⁵ Aquinas resumes his teaching as the *Ductor Dubitantium*. The history of the Franciscans had explained C. x. 96. There remains the difficulty connected with C. x. 114. How could it be said that Solomon was the wisest of all men? What was to be said of Adam (l. 37) before his fall, and of the Christ (l. 40), each of whom is described in his relation to the great work of redemption?

⁴¹ The term "satisfy" is used in its strictly scholastic sense, as in Anselm's theory of satisfaction in the *Cur Deus Homo*?

And so thy gaze perplexèd wonder shows,
 Because I said that ne'er a second yet
 Was like the good that fifth light did enclose.
 Now on mine answer let thine eyes be set,
 And thou wilt see thy thought and my reply 80
 Fit true, as centre with its circle met.
 That which dies not, and that too which may die,
 Are but the radiance of that Thought Supreme
 Which, in His love, our Sire begets on high ;
 So that the living Light which forth doth stream 85
 From His effulgence, and ne'er from it strays,
 Nor from the Love which is Triune with them,
 Through its own goodness gathers all its rays,
 As though reflected, in nine substances,
 While in Itself for ever One it stays, 90
 Thence to the lowest powers pours effluences,
 Downward from act to act, and so doth end,
 That all its works are brief contingencies :
 I by these things contingent comprehend
 All things created which the high heavens frame, 95
 With or without seed, as their way they wend.
 Their wax-like stuff, and that which moulds the same,
 Are not alike in all, and, this being so,
 The ideal stamp they more or less proclaim ;

⁸¹ The two truths, that the highest illumination possible for human nature was found in the first Adam before his fall, and in the second Adam, and that there was none like Solomon for wisdom, will be found to be in perfect harmony.

⁸² We enter on the highest regions of scholastic theology. All beings, immortal, like angels, or mortal, like men, are but rays of the Divine Idea, *i.e.*, the Word, in St. John's sense, which the Father, in His love, eternally begets (*Summ.* i. 34, 3), and that Word, as the true Light of the world, is never parted from Him or from the Love, *i.e.*, the Holy Spirit, who completes the Divine Trinity.

⁸³ The readings vary between *move* and *novæ*, of which the last is best supported ; and the thought is that the Divine Light imparts itself, still remaining One, to the nine orders of the heavenly hierarchy, who are the movers of the spheres (C. xxix. 143-145 ; *Conv.* ii. 6, iii. 14). From them it passes downwards to the "ultimate potencies," *i.e.*, the concrete material beings who are seen on earth (*Summ.* i. 47, 5). Its products in this lower sphere are, in scholastic language, "contingencies," varying in qualities and degrees ; not the work of chance, but of Divine power working through the heavens, and produced either from seeds which contain the germ of life or by spontaneous generation. In them, therefore, the Light of the Idea, *i.e.*, of the Divine Word, shines forth in varying measure. Hence the "diversity of gifts," seen alike in the fruits of the earth and in the minds of men (*Summ.* i. 22, 6 ; *Conv.* iii. 7). Assume a perfect recipient (the "wax" of l. 67) and a perfect heaven, and then the light would shine in its perfect brightness. But it is not so. Nature fails, (*Arist. Probl.* x. 44 ; *Phys.* ii. 8), as the artist fails whose hand is unequal to his conceptions (*Hooker, E. P.* i. 3, 3). If the creative action of the Divine Love, however, is immediate, then the result is absolute, and this was the case (1) in the creation of the world, which was pronounced "very good" (*Gen.* i. 32), and in the incarnation of the Word. So far Dante had been right. Solomon was inferior both to Adam and to Christ.

And thus it comes that on the same stock grow, 70
 In varying kind, or worse or better fruit,
 And ye are born with minds that diverse show.
 If that same wax should quite exactly suit,
 And did the Heavens' high virtue never fail,
 Then nothing would the seal's bright stamp dispute ; 75
 But Nature ever gives it weak and frail,
 E'en as the artist works who hath the skill
 Of art, and hands that, trembling, nought avail.
 If then the burning Love that worketh still
 Clear view of that first Virtue should assign, 80
 Then all perfection doth the impress fill.
 So once the earth was wrought to temper fine,
 For highest animal perfection meet ;
 So was the Virgin for her birth divine.
 So I thy judgment with approval greet, 85
 That human nature ne'er was, nor will be,
 Like that which had in those two forms its seat.
 Now if no further I my way should see,
 'How then to him was never equal known !'
 So would thy questioning words proceed from thee. 90
 But that the yet unseen may now be shown,
 Think who he was, and what his motive too,
 Who to his prayers the answer 'Ask thou' won.
 Not so I've spoken as to hide from view
 That he was king who asked for wisdom's dower, 95
 That a king's duty he might ably do ;
 'Twas not to know the number or the power
 Of these high spheres, nor if *necesse* wed
 With thing contingent, e'er *necesse* bore ;
 Nor *si est dare primum motum* said, 100
 Or if in semicircle there can be
 Triangle other than right-angled made.

■ The doubt is solved after the manner of Aquinas by a *distinguo*. Solomon had asked for wisdom, not absolutely, but as a king, that he might govern wisely (1 *Kings* iii. 5-9). In contrast with that high knowledge Dante mentions the chief questions of the schools which were most remote from practice. How many are the angelic movers of the spheres? Can a necessary conclusion follow from premisses of which one is necessary and the other contingent (Arist. *Anal. Pr.* i. 16)? Can motion, and therefore the universe which moves, be treated as eternal, or must we postulate a First Cause, itself unmoved, as the beginning of all motion? Can the angle in a semicircle be ever other than a right angle? It was not to such questions that the unequalled insight of Solomon applied itself.

Hence, if thou note what things I've said to thee,
 That peerless sight as kingly wisdom's seen,
 On which my meaning's arrow lighteth free. 106
 And if, clear-eyed, thou scan what 'rose' may mean,
 Thou'lt see that it to kings alone referred,
 Kings that are many, but few good, I ween.
 With this distinction take what thou hast heard,
 And thus it may accord with thy conceit 10
 Of our first sire, and Him to us endeared ;
 And let this be as lead unto thy feet,
 That thou, like wearied man, ply slower pace
 When 'Yes' or 'No' thou blindly would'st repeat ;
 For he among the fools holds lowest place 115
 Who, without due distinction, or denies,
 Or else affirms, and this in either case ;
 Because it chanches oft men's judgment flies
 With speed o'er-quick towards the falser part,
 And self-love binds our understanding's eyes. 120
 He more than vainly from the shore will start,
 Since he returneth not as first he came,
 Who angles for the truth yet fails in art ;
 And in the world, proofs open of the same,
 Parmenides, Melissos, Brissos stand, 125
 And many wanderers, more than I can name,

¹⁰⁶ Another subtle *distinguo*. Aquinas had applied the word "rose" to Solomon, and this could apply only to those who are placed above others, *sc.* to kings. It was with them, therefore, and not with Adam or Christ, that Solomon had been compared. The reasoning seems to us almost a caricature of the method of Aquinas, but I see no ground for questioning the good faith of Dante in his use of it, any more than in the casuistic discussion of C. v.

¹¹³ The scholar is taught by his experience of his own haste to be slow in affirming or denying when he sits in judgment on things too high for him. Haste in such matters is but a proof of unwisdom. Men may be swayed either by the opinion of the crowd around them or by their own prepossessions—what Bacon called the *eidola fori* and the *eidola speciei*. To seek for truth without knowing the method of dialectics is to put forth on the wide sea in search of fish without the art of the fisherman, and of this the philosophers who are named were instances.

¹²⁶ It is, to say the least, a noteworthy coincidence that two of these, Parmenides and Melissus, are named by Roger Bacon (*Op. Tert.* c. 39) in much the same way. The first was the founder of the Eleatic School of Greek philosophy (*A. circ.* a.c. 502). The error which Dante notes was probably that he accounted for the existence of the universe by the working of the two contrasted elements of fire as force and earth as matter, excluding the creative and disposing activity of God, and taught that matter was eternal. Melissus was of the same period and of the same school, probably a disciple of Parmenides, and carried his speculations, anticipating Berkeley, to the conclusion that the actual world of which the senses take cognisance has no real existence when contemplated by the reason. Brissos or Bryson, said to have been the disciple of Euclid or of Stilpo of Megara, was said to have occupied himself with the quadrature of the circle (C. xxxiii. 134). Of all these attempts to solve the mystery of the universe without revelation Dante affirms that "they knew not whither they went," did not see, *i.e.*, that they were drifting to Pantheism or Atheism. With them he classes Sabellius, who confounded the Persons of the Trinity in Unity, and Arius, who denied the divinity and eternity of the Person of the Son.

Sabellius and Arius, too, the band
 Of fools, who were as swords to Scripture's sense,
 To make its clear looks twist at their command.
 Nor let men now with caution due dispense 130
 In judging, as he does who ere the hour
 Of ripeness counts the harvest's opulence.
 For I have seen, through winter's frost and shower,
 The briar appear all stiff and hard to see,
 Then on its summit bear its roseate flower; 135
 And I have seen a ship drive fast and free
 O'er the wide waves in safety all the way,
 And at the harbour's entrance shipwrecked be.
 Let not Dame Berta or Ser Martin say,
 Seeing one man rob, another sacrifice, 140
 They see the doom of God's great judgment-day;
 For one may fall, the other too may rise."

¹³⁷ The comparison may be either (1) that, like swords, they hacked and mutilated the fair face of truth, or (2) that they reflected that truth, as a sword reflects the features of a man, dimly and distortedly. Of these, (2) seems preferable.

¹³⁹ A warning like that of C. xix. 97, xx. 133, against haste in judging, partly an echo of 1 Cor. iv. 5, partly of Matt. xiii. 29. The two examples of premature judgment are chosen as against hasty condemnation or hasty praise. We may condemn a character as wild and hard which will afterwards blossom into beauty. We may think that a man has almost finished his voyage across the sea of life, and yet he may at last make shipwreck. Was Dante thinking of himself in the first case, of Celestine V. or Brunetto Latini in the second? We are reminded of the words with which Bunyan ends his *Pilgrim's Progress*: "I saw that there was a way to Hell from the gates of Heaven as well as from the City of Destruction."

¹⁴⁰ The two names are taken as among the most common to represent the self-confidence of the ignorant, the "unlearned" of 1 Cor. xiv. 16. "Martin" is used in the same way in *Conv.* i. 8. Such persons form their judgments from single acts without taking into account the infinite complexity of motives and influence. They see the robber, and condemn; they see the offering, and applaud. They do not take into account that the robber may repent at the last moment; that the offering may be that of a hypocrite, or a self-righteous formalist. The lesson which Dante draws is the old lesson "Judge nothing before the time" (1 Cor. iv. 5): never to despair, however low the sinner may have fallen; not to be high-minded, but fear, knowing that even the grey-haired saint may prove a wanderer from the fold.

CANTO XIV.

*The Fifth Heaven, of Mars—The Starry Cross—The Souls of Martyrs
and Crusaders.*

FROM rim to centre, centre to the rim,
 The water moves itself in vessel round,
 As struck from out or inside of the brim.
 Within my thoughts dropt suddenly, I found
 This that I speak of, when the glorious shade
 Of great St. Thomas no more uttered sound,
 Through the resemblance to my mind conveyed,
 'Twixt his discourse and that of Beatrice,
 Who after him thus her beginning made :
 "This man hath need, nor yet with voice applies
 To tell it, no, nor even in his mind,
 To reach the root where yet one more truth lies ;
 Tell if the light wherewith enflowered we find
 Your substance will remain with you for aye
 As now it is, while endless ages wind ;
 And if it so remain, then after say,
 How, when once more ye visible are made,
 It shall not vex your eyesight with its ray."
 As now and then, by joy's excess betrayed,
 They lift their voice who circling dance along,
 And the whole game with greater mirth is played,
 Thus at that prayer, so earnest and so strong,
 The circles of the blessed showed new joy
 In their quick whirling and their wondrous song.
 Whoso at thought of dying feels annoy
 To live above, be sure he doth not see
 The eternal shower of gladness they enjoy.

¹ The words indicate the minute observer of phenomena (C. ii. 100-105) watching the vibrations of the water in a basin and endeavouring to discover the law which governs them. The voice of Aquinas came from the circumference to the centre ; that of Beatrice from the centre to the circumference.

¹² Beatrice becomes the interpreter of another question in Dante's mind, as yet not uttered in words, scarcely even formulated in thought. Would the light which now hid form and features from Dante's gaze continue after the Resurrection and for ever ? and if so, how could the eyes of the resurrection body look on them without injury ? As in other instances, question and answer are both verified from Aquinas (*SUMMA*. iii. 85, 1).

¹⁹ The rejoicing of the souls in Paradise is likened to the dances, at once vocal and pantomimic, of Italy, in which every varying emotion found expression.

²⁶ The thought seems to rise out of the memory of what his own sorrow had been at the

The ever-living One and Two and Three,
 The ever-reigning Three and Two and One,
 Boundless Himself, bounds all things else that be— 30
 Three times to Him due praise by each was done,
 Of those blest spirits, with such melody,
 Full guerdon 'twere for all that merit won.
 And in the light that shone most gloriously
 In the near ring I heard as modest strain 35
 As Gabriel's when to Mary he drew nigh,
 Answer: "As long as with us shall remain
 The joy of Paradise, so long our love
 Such vesture radiant round us shall retain.
 Its brightness doth our ardour's measure prove, 40
 The ardour comes from vision, and that grows,
 As it has grace its natural strength above.
 And when re clothed with flesh our body shows,
 Glorious and holy, then our being's bliss
 Will be more sweet as it completeness knows; 45
 And so will grow and brighten in us this,
 The light the Chief Good gives of His free grace,
 The light by which we see Him as He is.
 And thus that vision needs must grow apace,
 Grow too the ardour kindled by that sight; 50
 Grow too the brightness shed from it through space.
 But as a coal that giveth flame and light,
 Yet these by its white heat surpasseth so,
 That its own aspect still maintains its right,

death of Beatrice (*Caus. v. vi.*) Had he rightly judged, he would have rejoiced instead of lamenting at the death of any whose life gave good grounds for hoping, as hers did, that they were meet for Paradise.

³⁰ An echo of *Purg. xi. 1* and *Conv. iv. 9*. Looking to Dante's constant reference to the services of the Latin Church, the words were probably meant to refer to the *Ter-Sanctus*, or to the yet more familiar *Doxology*.

³⁴ The light which speaks is identified by *C. x. 109* as the soul of Solomon, the author, not only of *Proverbs* or *Ecclesiastes*, but also of the *Song of Songs*, in which the mediæval mystics had seen a revelation of the joys of Paradise. *Comp. Purg. xxx. 10*. Possibly, also, as Butler suggests, Dante may have thought of him, as most mediæval scholars did, as the author of the *Book of Wisdom*.

³⁷ The answer is that the glory with which the saints are clothed comes from their love, and their love from the beatific vision, and their vision from the grace of God—"super-effluent grace," as Ken would have called it—added to the merit which each had gained by his personal holiness. It will, therefore, be eternal, and, in accordance with the doctrine of *H. vi. 106*, it will be increased when the soul is clothed again with its spiritual body. And that body will have organs of its own, stronger and more perfect than those of the natural body, and will therefore be able to bear what these shrink from.

So shall the glory that doth round us show 85
 Yield in its radiance to the fleshly frame
 Which now the earth hides sepulchred below ;
 Nor shall we wearied grow with that bright flame,
 For all our body's organs will be strong
 For every object that delights the same." 90
 So quick and eager in their burst of song,
 With loud *Amen*, seemed each ring of the choirs,
 They seemed for their dead bodies much to long ;
 Not for themselves alone were their desires,
 Perchance, but mothers, fathers, others, dear, 95
 Ere yet they shone among the eternal fires.
 And lo ! all round, with equal brightness clear,
 A glory shone, the former light above,
 As when the horizon's glow doth reappear.
 And, as when early eve begins to move, 70
 New stars are seen in the bright firmament,
 And whether true or false we scarce can prove,
 So then new forms of being did present
 Themselves to me, and made an outer ring
 That far beyond those other circles went. 75
 O Holy Spirit's true illumining !
 How sudden on mine eyes its burning light
 So poured, that they shrank back in suffering !
 But Beatrice then so wondrous bright
 With smiles appeared, that with what else was seen, 80
 My mind must leave it as beyond its might.

⁶³ The teaching of Solomon is confirmed by the "Amen" (Dante uses the popular *Amme*, still common in Tuscany, into which the Hebrew word had guided).

⁶⁴ The perverse ingenuity of commentators has inferred from the absence of any relations except father and mother that he, for his part, did not desire to meet his wife in Paradise. My own conclusion is just the opposite. The other "dear ones," both here and in C. xvii. 55, seem to me expressly intended to include both her and her children.

⁷⁰ A third circle gathers round the other two, but we are not told of whom it consists. They are probably brought in, as it were, to complete the triplicity of those who sing the praises of the Trinity in unity (l. 28). Readers of the *Christian Year* will be reminded by l. 71 of the lines

"Whoever saw . . .
 Or, when the summer sun goes down,
 The first soft star in Evening's crown
 Light up her gleaming crest?"—*4th Sun. in Lent.*

This is the last vision in the sphere of the sun. From this—Beatrice increasing in beauty as she rises—they pass to the sphere of Mars, which is recognised, as on earth, by its red light, and Dante offers directly the holocaust of his praise.

Anon mine eyes, restored to vision keen,
 Looked up, and now I saw we were transferred,
 I and my Lady, to bliss more serene.
 Well saw I we a higher clime had neared 85
 By the full glowing smile of that bright star,
 Which ruddier than its wont to me appeared.
 With all my heart, and with the words that are
 The same for all men, I made sacrifice,
 Meet for that last new grace so passing rare. 90
 Nor from my breast the glow had ceased to rise
 Of that same holocaust, before I knew
 That offering had found favour in God's eyes ;
 For with such brightness and such roseate hue
 Splendours I saw in two such radiant lines, 95
 I cried, "O Elios, here thy work I view !"
 As, marked by less and greater starry signs,
 The Galaxy, the world's great poles between,
 Perplexing sages, in its whiteness shines,
 Thus constellate in depths of Mars' bright sheen, 100
 Those rays the venerable sign did make,
 Which, where four quadrants intersect, is seen.
 Here skill and power 'neath memory's burden break,
 For on that cross, all flashing, shone the Christ,
 So that I know not what fit type to take ; 105
 But whoso takes his cross and follows Christ
 Will pardon me for what I leave unsaid,
 Seeing in that sheen the levin-flash of Christ.

⁸⁵ The "Elios" has been the *crux* of commentators. Did Dante mean it for the Greek *Helios* (=Sun) or for the Hebrew *Elion* (=the Most High), or was it an echo from the "Eli, Eli," which he found in *Matt.* xxvii. 46? C. xxvi. 134-136 seems in favour of the last conjecture. He was, as we have seen, fond, as we should say, of "airing" his Hebrew (C. vii. 1-3; *H.* vii. 1).

⁹⁰ The Milky Way (*Met.* i. 168) was, with Dante, as with other mediæval students of science, one of the problems which he could not solve. In *Conv.* ii. 15 he enumerates the various thoughts that had gathered round it, from the story of Phaethon, and the Pythagorean view that the sun had once deviated from its course and left its pathway of brightness, to the popular belief which connected it somehow with St. James of Compostella. The lights which he saw formed a cross within the circumference of a circle, and he recognised the symbol of the Christ. It is noteworthy that in *Conv.* ii. 14 he describes a luminous cross as having appeared near Mars in Florence. Possibly this was the comet mentioned by *Vill.* viii. 48 as having appeared in September 1301 (*Bull.*). Popular superstition looked on it as pre-saging the coming of Charles of Valois. The cross, it will be noted, was after the Greek pattern, such as that with which early Byzantine and Italian art was familiar in the aureole of our Lord, as distinguishing Him from the saints.

¹⁰⁵ He who follows Christ will know His incomparable preciousness, and will, therefore, forgive the poet for not venturing on a comparison. As a rhyme unto itself, *Cristo* again stands in the original as in the translation. C. xii. 71-75, xix. 104-108, xxxii. 83-87.

From arm to arm, and from the foot to head,
 Moved to and fro bright lights, and, as they went, 110
 Meeting and crossing, sparkling rays they shed.
 So see we oft, in straight line now, now bent,
 Now swift, now slow, in ever-changing mode,
 The atoms small, of more or less extent,
 Move in the ray which makes a shining road 115
 Through shadows thick, where men, on screen or fence
 Their skill, and art, and labour have bestowed.
 And as the lyre and harp, when duly tense
 Their many strings, make pleasant harmony
 For him who of each note has little sense, 120
 So then the lights that there appeared to me
 Around the cross melodious song did raise,
 Which rapt me, though their hymn mine ears did flee.
 Well did I know it was of loftiest praise,
 For unto me "Arise and conquer" came, 125
 As, understanding not, one hears a phrase.
 So much therewith enamoured I became,
 That until then had not been anything
 That with such pleasant bonds my strength o'ercame.

¹⁰⁹ Along the four arms of the cross thus seen appear sparks of brightness thick as the dust motes which float in the ray that makes its way through a shutter or a screen. These, as already suggested in l. 106, are chiefly the souls of faithful Crusaders. The mingling of many voices answers to their multitude. There is a vague impression of something melodious, but neither words nor tune are heard distinctly. *Bull.* compares *Lucr.* ii. 115.

¹²⁵ The words, either in the imperative or indicative mood, are addressed to Christ. Analogy would lead us to expect either a quotation from Scripture or from some well-known anthem, but the nearest approaches to the former suggested by commentators (*Isai.* li. 9; *Rev.* v. 5) are sufficiently remote. I incline to *Ps.* lxxviii. 1, the proper Psalm for Whit-Sunday, as more probable. The sequence for the Thursday in Easter Week in the Sarum Missal, and probably therefore in that of the Italian churches in Dante's time, contains the words "*Resumpta carne resurgit victor die in tertid.*" And preceding these are words which may have suggested the comparison of l. 118—

"Nos quoque laxas aptemus fibras arte musicâ,
 Voce sonorâ modificantes prosis neumata,
 Voce satîs tinnulâ."

Political commentators, after their manner, read between the lines, and see in the words, as addressed to Dante, a command to "arise and conquer" in the strength which was hoped for from the appointment of Can Grande as Captain-General of the Ghibellines.

¹²⁷ No previous rapture had equalled that which the poet felt on hearing, though incompletely, the Resurrection Hymn. Did he seem, in saying this, to disparage the joy which came to him from the eyes of Beatrice? "No" is his answer, for he had not looked in those eyes since he came into the sphere of Mars. That holy joy was not yet opened to him; or, adopting another meaning for *dischiuso*, as in C. vii. 102, it was not *excluded*; nay, rather was implied, as being soon to coalesce with and form a part of it (C. xv. 32). What is the thought to be read between the lines? Possibly this, that the joy of the thought of the triumph of Christ's resurrection surpasses all previous joy in the contemplation of Divine Wisdom, till that Wisdom, in due course, takes that triumph as the subject-matter of its meditation.

Perhaps my words may have too bold a ring, 120
 Seeming to slight the charm of those sweet eyes,
 Rapt in whose gaze desire doth fold her wing ;
 But who reflects that as we higher rise
 Each living type of beauty charms us more,
 And that my gaze was there turned otherwise, 125
 He may excuse what 'gainst myself I score,
 Myself excusing, and my truth confess ;
 For joy supreme here oped not all its store,
 For, as one mounts, it gains more power to bless.

CANTO XV.

Cacciaguida—The good old Times of Florence.

A WILL benign, wherein we ever see
 The love which breatheth rightly flow amain,
 As base desire does in iniquity,
 Imposed a silence on that sweet refrain,
 And all the holy chords were hushed and still, 5
 Which Heaven's right hand doth slacken or doth strain.
 How can our righteous prayers meet answer chill
 From beings who in concord stayed the flow
 Of song to breathe in me a prayerful will ?
 Well is it he should suffer endless woe 10
 Who, for the love of thing that cannot last,
 For ever of this love despoiled doth go.
 As in clear heaven, by not a cloud o'ercast,
 There shoots at times a sudden-kindled fire,
 Rousing the eyes, till then set firm and fast, 15
 And seems a star that doth new place desire,
 Save that where it was seen to flash in sight
 Not one is lost, while it doth soon expire ;

¹ The heavenly souls were silent, but their very silence was a proof of their love, for they stopped their song to allow the poet to give utterance to his prayers. One who shut that love out for the sake of the lower love of perishable things might well be in his turn shut out from love, as the fit reward of his evil choice.

¹⁵ The simile of a shooting star appears in Dante's two favourite poets (*Æn.* ii. 693 ; *Met.* ii. 321). Such a star appears moving along the right radius of the Greek Cross. It is, as the sequel shows, the soul of Cacciaguida, Dante's great ancestor, hastening to meet his descendant, as Anchises did to meet Æneas in the Elysian fields (*Æn.* vi. 684-691 ; *Purg.* v. 37).

So from the arm that stretched towards the right,
 Unto that cross's foot, there moved a star 20
 From out the constellation shining bright.
 Nor strayed the gem beyond its radiant bar,
 But sped along the central column's way,
 As fire is seen through alabaster spar.
 So pitying moved Anchises' soul, they say, 25
 If we may credence give to that high *Musa*,
 His son beholding in Elysian day.
 " *O sanguis meus, O super infusa*
 Gratia Dei; sicut tibi, cui
 Bis unquam Cœli janua reclusa?" 30
 Thus spake that light, and so I turned to see,
 And then I to my Lady turned mine eyes
 On either side, in sore perplexity;
 For in her eyes a glowing smile did rise,
 Such that I thought I plumbed the depth with mine 35
 Both of my grace and of my Paradise.
 Then, joyous both to see and hear, the line
 Which he began, the spirit carried on,
 And spake of deep things I could not divine.
 Not by his choice his words obscurely shone, 40
 But of necessity; for e'en his thought
 Had far beyond the grasp of mortal gone.
 And when the bow of ardent love, o'erwrought,
 Was slackened to the standard of our sense,
 So that his speech now plainer meaning taught, 45
 These were the first words that I heard from thence:
 "Blessed be ever Thou, the One, the Three,
 Who to my seed such bounty dost dispense!"

²⁰ a *Cor.* xii. 2-4 would seem to suggest that St. Paul had had a like privilege, but possibly Dante limited that vision to the earthly Paradise and to the third Heaven, beyond which he had now passed. In *H.* ii. 32 Dante (where see *note*) speaks as if St. Paul's visit had been to the region of the lost. Why does he put Latin into his great-grandsire's lips? Probably to indicate that at that period the "vulgar tongue" of modern Italian had not yet been formed. What men spoke was still, as in *V. E.* i. 10, Latin with variations. Comp. *C.* xvi. 33, where his words, though given in Italian, are said to have been spoken in a more archaic form.

²⁵ The phrase is almost an exact echo of that with which the first salute of Beatrice is described in *V. N. c.* 2. It was "*Qualis ab incepto.*"

³⁰ We are reminded of a *Cor.* xii. 4. Line 47 suggests the thought that it was the close of a half-eucharistic, half-prophetic prayer. Reading the future in the mirror of divine knowledge, Cacciaguida had long known that he was to see Dante, and had hungered for the meeting. Thanks to Beatrice, the craving was at last satisfied.

And then went on : "Long hunger, sweet to me,
 That moved me as the volume great I read, 80
 Wherein nor white nor dark e'er changed can be,
 Thou hast, my son, within this glory fed,
 This wherein now I speak to thee, through grace
 Of her who for such flight thy wings hath sped.
 Thou deem'st that I thine every thought can trace 85
 In Him who is the First, as when we know
 The five and six developed from the ace.
 And therefore who I am and why I grow
 Joyous at sight of thee more than the rest
 Of this glad crowd, thou dost not bid me show. 90
 Thou thinkest right ; who live among the blest,
 Greater or less, have truth in that glass spied
 Where, ere thou think'st, thy thought is manifest.
 But that the holy love, which I long tide
 Have watched, which fills my soul, in very deed, 95
 With sweet desire, may best be satisfied,
 Let thy speech now free, frank and open plead,
 Find word each wish, each fond desire find word,
 For which e'en now my answer is decreed."
 I turned to Beatrice, and she heard 70
 Before I spake, and smiled to me a sign
 By which the wings of my desire were stirred.
 Then I began : "In you doth Love combine
 With Wisdom, since the first Equality
 Upon you dawned, in equal weight and line : 75
 For in the Sun, whence light and heat flow free,
 And burn and shine, they are so equal found
 That all comparisons but feeble be ;

⁸⁸ Dante's silence is explained. He believed that the spirit's knowledge of his thoughts came from the Primal Unity, *sc.* from God, who "understood them long before," and inferred that what was true of one thought would be true of others also, and therefore had not cared to utter them. So the Pythagoreans had taught that a true conception of the unit involved that of other numbers.

⁸⁹ The words are not without their bearing on the great paradox of prayer. God knows our wants and our desires before we ask, and our ignorance in asking, and yet He finds a joy in their clear full utterance by us.

⁷⁴ In what sense is God named as the Primal Equality? (1) As being He in whom there is no variableness or shadow of turning (*James* i. 17), always equal to Himself; (2) as being He in whom there is no before or after, no degrees of attributes; (3) though less probably, with reference to the Three Persons in the Godhead as co-equal as well as co-eternal. The souls of the blessed are in their vision sharers in that equality, and with them perception and affection are absolutely coincident, while in men one precedes the other. Dante therefore, as in *C. xiv. 88*, can only return his thanks at first in general terms, and waits to know who it is that speaks to him.

But will and power upon our mortal ground,
 For reason which to you is manifest, 80
 Are as to wings of diverse pinions bound.
 Whence I, who am but mortal, am opprest
 With this diverseness, nor can fit thanks frame,
 Save in my heart, when by such father blest.
 But let me ask, O living topaz-flame, 85
 Who in this precious jewel thus art set,
 That thou would'st still my cravings with thy name."
 "O scion of my house, in whom I, yet
 Waiting, found joy, thy root behold in me."
 So he began when me his answer met; 90
 And then he said, "The stock whence came to thee
 Thy kindred's name, a hundred years and more
 Has circled this Mount's lowest gallery,
 Thy father's grandsire was, my son of yore;
 Well were it thou his lengthened weary toil 95
 Should'st sooner by thy works to rest restore.
 Florence, whose ancient walls, around her soil,
 Still hear the tierce and nones of neighbouring shrine,
 Was chaste and sober, and without turmoil.
 No golden chains, nor crowns that glittering shine, 100
 Nor sandalled dames had she, nor bordered zone
 That from the wearer drew the gazer's eyne;

⁸⁰ We are thrown back upon Dante's memories of his childhood. Cacciaguida was obviously the hero of those early days, the great name that shed its lustre on the family traditions. From his son, Aldighieri, of the parish of St. Martin at Florence (named in a document of 1189; *Frat. V. D.* p. 38), had come the name which the poet bore. He had died (l. 92) in 1301, and the fact that he was on the first "cornice" of the Mount of Cleansing would imply that his sin had been that of pride, in which Dante may well have recognised (*Purg.* xiii. 136) the hereditary fault, which he himself shared. Italian commentators gravely discuss the question how far the date of Aldighieri's sojourn in Purgatory is correctly measured by a hundred years. Some admit the possibility of error in Dante; others would set aside the records that attest the actual date of his death, or fix 1301 for the ideal date of the vision.

⁸⁵ Works as well as prayers were recognised as availing to shorten the purgatorial discipline of departed souls.

⁹⁷ The extent of the walls of Florence (1078) is elaborately traced in *Vill.* iv. 8. Near these walls was the old Benedictine abbey, whose clock, as it struck the canonical hours, served as a standard of time for the whole of Florence. Benvenuto notes the fact that he could bear witness to its accuracy in striking when he attended Boccaccio's lectures on Dante in that church. Possibly this may be the clock described in *C. x.* 139-148, but I find no trace of its having the revolving figures there described.

¹⁰⁰ We are reminded at once of *Isai.* iii. 16-24; *1 Tim.* ii. 9; *1 Pet.* iii. 3, and of Savonarola's protests against the luxurious vanities of his time. *Vill.* (x. 150) gives an elaborate account of them in 1330, and of the sumptuary laws which were made with a view to check them. The "chains" seem to have been of the nature of bracelets or anklets.

¹⁰¹ The two special fashions condemned seemed to have been (1) that of the boots which the ladies of Florence wore, of coloured and gilt leather, running to a sharp point, and (2)

She made not then the father's heart to groan
 O'er daughter's birth, for then the year and dower
 Had not, this side or that, due bounds outgrown. 105
 No homes undwelt in had she in that hour;
 Not then had come a new Sardanapal,
 To show a wanton chambering's evil power.
 Not yet surpassed in fame was Montemal'
 By your Uccellatoio, conquered now 110
 In rising, as it shall be in its fall.
 Bellincion Berti saw I girdled go
 With bone and leather, and I saw his bride
 Turn from her mirror with no painted show.
 A Nerli and a Vecchio too I spied, 115
 Content with dress where plain buff met the eye,
 Their wives with flax and spindle occupied.

that of the girdle, which was so gorgeous that it attracted more notice than the form which is decked. Ovid (*Rem. Amor.* 344) may have floated before Dante's mind—

*"Gemmis auroque teguntur
 Omnia: pars minima est ipsa puella sui."*

Comp. also *Conv.* i. 10.

¹⁰⁴ Early marriages, at the age of fifteen or even twelve, and settlements which almost broke the father or the husband's back, were two of the evils which, in Dante's view, were eating like a canker into the home life of Florence. If I mistake not, the words take their place among the most intensely personal in the whole poem. But for those precocious marriages *de convenance* for wealth and station, how different, how "earthly happier," might not Dante's life have been! Do we not trace the memory of the bitterness of the moment when, on his return from school or college, at the age of eighteen, he found the idol of his boyhood married to Simon de' Bardi?

¹⁰⁵ The line may indicate either (1) the effect of a profligate luxury in making men shun the burden of a family, or (2) the ostentation which led some citizens to have more houses than they inhabited, or (3) the party spirit which left houses empty by banishing their inhabitants. The context points to (1) as the most probable.

¹⁰⁶ Here again we have to choose between the dissoluteness of Sardanapalus or the effeminate luxury which showed itself in the coverlets and beds of down which are condemned in *H.* xxiv. 47. So Juvenal (x. 36) speaks of

"Et Venere, et cenis et plumis Sardanapali."

¹⁰⁷ Monte Malo, the *Monte Mario* of modern Rome, which gives the first view of Rome on the road from Viterbo, was covered, when Dante wrote, by the villas of its nobles. The hill Uccellatoio was, in like manner, the spot which gave the first view of Florence, and this also had been fortified and covered with palatial houses. Florence had surpassed Rome in its rise; it should surpass it also in its fall.

¹¹³ Bellincion Berti (comp. *Vill.* iv. 1), father of the good Gualdrada (*H.* xvi. 37), of the family of the Ravignani, is taken as the type of the *popolo vecchio*, with his buff jerkin and bone clasp, and his wife, who had not yet learned the use of rouge, nor of what we call "pearl-powder," for her complexion.

¹¹⁵ The Nerli, on the left bank of the Arno, were among the older powerful Guelph families of Florence (*Vill.* iv. 13, v. 39, vi. 33). One of them was Consul in 1104. In Dante's time some were Neri and some Bianchi (*Vill.* viii. 39). The Vecchi or Vecchietti belonged to the same order. They too were content with buff jerkins without trimmings, their wives with the clothes which they wove for themselves. They too were divided in their politics between the two factions (*Vill.* viii. 39).

O happy they !—and each might certain die
 Of her own burial-place, and none was yet
 For France left lonely in her bed to lie. 120
 This o'er the cradle watchful care did set,
 And hushed her infant with the babbling speech
 Which doth in parents' hearts delight beget ;
 That from her distaff would the long thread reach,
 And, as she conversed with her family, 125
 Of Trojans, Fiesole, and Rome would teach.
 Men then had seen with full as wondering eye
 A Cianghella or a Salterell'
 As now a Cincinnatus or Cornelia.
 To such fair life, where all sped calm and well, 130
 True life of citizens, to such a share
 In citizenship true, to such hostel,
 Did Mary give me, called by many a prayer,
 To that your old Baptistery, wherein
 Christian's and Cacciaguida's name I bare. 135

118 Do we hear the sigh of the exile, uncertain whether he, or the wife, sister, daughter whom he loved should be buried with their fathers, and thinking of his wife left to her lonely bed, through the arts of Charles of Valois ? More definitely the lines speak of the fashion which led men to go to France and other countries in search of fortune, leaving their wives in Florence. Had the banking business of Simon de' Bardi led him to make Paris his headquarters, while Beatrice was left to the society of her lady friends ? Comp. vol. i. p. xlv.

121 The older matrons of Florence were not ashamed to nurse their own children, and lull them with the nursery words which true fathers and mothers delight to use. They would sit spinning and telling their tales of old times. Was the scene of Lucretia and her maidens (*Liv.* i. 57) present to Dante's mind ? It may be fairly assumed that the picture was one with which Dante's own childhood had been familiar, and so throws light on his early home-life and its influences. The tale of Troy, the foundation of Fiesole by Electra (*H.* iv. 121), the history of Rome as the mother city of Florence, were among his earliest memories.

127 Cianghella della Tosa appears to have been one of the leaders of fashion in Dante's time, shameless and luxurious, asserting her claims to precedence by acts of personal violence to those who did not recognise them. The name of the family appears frequently in Villani (*viii.* 71, ix. 76, *et al.*). Some were connected with the Neri, but one, Rosso della Tosa, who was at one time a leader of that party, became afterwards prominent as an opponent of Corso Donati. Lapo Salterello is named in *D. C.* 246 as a Ghibelline connected with the Cerchi. He was included in the same decree of banishment as Dante (*D. C.* 273). The commentators speak of him as extravagant and profligate. He was probably among the exiles whom Dante had learnt to scorn (*C.* xvii. 68). His name appears in the list of Priori to whom Dante owed his appointment, and he was included in the same sentence of condemnation. Comp. vol. i. p. lxxviii.

129 Cincinnatus is, of course, the Dictator of that name (*Liv.* iii. 25) ; Cornelia may be either the mother of the Gracchi or the wife of Pompeius. Lucan's praises of the latter (*viii.* 577-780) tend to turn the scale in her favour.

130 The reader will scarcely fail to recall John of Gaunt's speech in Shakespeare, *Richard II.* We note the contrast between the "*dolce ostello*" of the poem and the "*di dolore ostello*" of *Purg.* vi. 76. See note on *C.* xvi. 33.

135 The birth of Cacciaguida has been fixed at 1106. Dante records with pride the fact that his great-grand sire and himself had been baptised at the same font, that of his "beautiful St. John's" (*C.* xxv. 9 ; *H.* xix. 17). Comp. vol. i. p. xlii. Cacciaguida, it will be seen, was the Crusader's Christian name. It has been conjectured from the name of one of his brothers that he belonged to the Elisei, who are named in *Vill.* iv. 11 as among the noble families of Florence under Conrad I. (911-918), but there is no historical foundation for the statement.

Moronto, Eliseo, were my kin ;
 My wife came to me from the vale of Po,
 And thence thy parents did their surname win.
 The Emperor Conrad then I followed so
 That he gave me the girdle of a knight, 140
 So well my good deeds in his eyes did show.
 With him I went against the evil might
 Of that false law, whose followers occupy
 Usurping, through the Shepherd's fault, your right :
 There by that people base and vile did I 145
 From that deceitful world obtain release,
 The love of which turns many a soul awry,
 And passed from martyr's pain to this my peace."

CANTO XVI.

Cacciaguida's History of the Greatness and Fall of Florence.

O WEAK and poor nobility of birth !
 If thou dost make the people boast of thee,
 Where languishes affection, here on earth,
 No more 'twill be a wondrous thing to me,
 For there, where appetite ne'er goes astray, 5
 I mean in Heaven, from pride I was not free.

¹³⁷ Three cities, Ferrara, Parma, and Verona, have been named as the birthplace of Cacciaguida's wife. Cittadella (*Le Fam. degli Ald. a Ferrara*) proves that a family named Aldighieri existed in the first of these cities. Villani (*V. D.* p. 9) says that the name was well known at Parma. Dionisi (*Anedd.* ii. 35-37) asserts that an Aldighieri was judge of Verona in 1112. So it is still *lis sub iudice* (*Scart.*) On the name see vol. i. p. xxxvi.

¹³⁸ Conrad II. (1024-39), who took part, with Louis VII. of France, in the second Crusade and besieged Damascus, is probably the Emperor referred to. Villani (iv. 9) relates that he had many Florentine citizens in his army, and that they were high in his favour. Most critics, however, refer Cacciaguida's words to Conrad III. (1138-1152). (See C. xvi. 37 n.)

¹⁴³ We note the same protest against the abandonment of the Crusades by the Popes of Dante's time as in C. ix. 126. Clement V. and John XXII. might collect tithes throughout Europe ostensibly for the recovery of the Holy Land, but the money remained in their coffers (vol. i. p. cxlii.)

¹⁴⁸ The words imply that Cacciaguida died in the Crusade campaign, and probably Dante uses "*martirio*" in its highest sense. For the most part, however, it is used in the *Commedia* (*H.* xii. 61, xiv. 65), and in other passages, simply for "torments," and that may be its meaning here.

¹ In *Caus.* xvi. and *Conv.* iv. Dante had maintained the doctrine "*virtus sola nobilitas*." In this he followed Boethius (iii. 6), who only admitted an inherited nobility on the *noblesse oblige* principle. That teaching had marked the democratic period of his life. In *Mon.* ii. 3, which is nearer in time and tone to the teaching of this Canto, he recognises both forms of nobility as having a real worth. Here he pleads guilty to the charge that he was not exempted from the weakness which exalts in the virtues even of one illustrious ancestor. Poor it might be, as compared with the personal nobility of holiness, but it was natural, and therefore right. It did not altogether clash with the thoughts that belonged to Paradise.

A cloak thou art which shortens day by day,
 So that, unless we fresh additions make,
 Time with his scissors cuts it all away !
 With " You"—the word which suffering Rome first spake, 10
 (In which her children fail to persevere),
 My words began again their course to take.
 Then Beatrice, just apart, yet near,
 Smiling, appeared like her, the coughing maid,
 Who marked the first sin writ of Guinevere. 15
 I then began, " You are my sire," I said,
 " You grant to me to speak with freedom bold,
 You raise me, and new self leaves self in shade.
 Through many streams my soul with bliss untold
 Is filled, and finds in this so pure a joy, 20
 That, without bursting, it such cheer may hold.
 Tell me, dear root ancestral, their employ,
 Who were thy sires, and how the years passed on
 Which tracked their course when thou wast yet a boy.
 Tell me about the sheepfold of St. John, 25
 What it then was, and who the people were
 That then the highest seats of honour won."
 As kindles charcoal into bright flame clear
 At breath of wind, so I beheld that light
 More radiant at my blandishments appear ; 30

⁷ The words imply the admission that the Alighieri family had not acted on the *noblesse oblige* principle. Time had clipped the mantle, and they had done nothing to keep up its measure. Did he feel conscious, with a proud humility, that he had "from day to day" been adding to its proportions?

¹⁰ Thrice only in the *Commedia* does Dante himself use the plural pronoun for the singular in words spoken to one person, to Brunetto (*H.* xv. 30), to Beatrice (*Purg.* xxxiii. 92), and here. Francesca had used it also in speaking to Dante (*H.* v. 95). It was therefore a mark of special reverence and honour, and so he uses it now to his great forefather. The mediæval tradition, reported by all the commentators, was that *vos* was first used at Rome instead of *tu* in the address of the Senate to Julius Cæsar, when, as Dictator, he united in himself all the offices of the Republic (*Benév., Ott.*) As a matter of fact, however, there is, I believe, no instance of this use of *vos* before the 3rd century after Christ. Dante notes, with the minuteness which characterises the *V. E.*, that at Rome the *voi* had disappeared even when men spoke to a Pope or Emperor. With him it is a mark of exceptional reverence, which it is, of course, impossible to express in an English translation. The use of the third person feminine, as in modern Italian, is of much later date.

¹⁵ The words refer to the same story as that of *H.* v. 129-137. Branguina, a lady of Guenevere's court, saw the kiss which the queen gave Lancelot, and by her cough showed the lovers that they were not unnoticed. The story is told in a MS. in the *Bibliothèque Nationale* of Paris, and is given in full by Mr. Paget Toynbee in the *Transactions of the Cambridge (U.S.A.) Dante Society* for 1886. A brief sketch (without the cough though) by Uhland may be found in *D. Gesell.* i. 119.

²³ Dante asks the same question as Farinata had asked of him (*H.* ix. 49). How far back can he trace his ancestry? What had been the state of Florence in the beginning of the 13th century? May we think of Dante as having been in Rome with Villani in the year of the Jubilee, and having felt, with him, the impulse of historical enthusiasm (*Vill.* viii. 36)? See vol. I. p. lxxv.

And as unto mine eyes it showed more bright,
 So with a voice more tender and more sweet,
 But not with this our modern accent quite,
 He said, "Since *Ave* first the ear did greet,
 Unto that birth when she who now is blest 35
 Was freed from me, her freight, in season meet,
 Five hundred times and fourscore had the crest
 Of this star to its Lion found its way,
 With fresh flame at its feet itself to vest.
 I and my fathers saw the light of day 40
 Where first is found their last ward's boundary
 Who in your annual games their speed display.
 Let this suffice for tale of ancestry;
 But who they were, and whence they thither came,
 Less honour doth in speech than silence lie. 45
 All those who bore arms at the time I name,
 Between the Baptist and Mars' statue old,
 Were but a fifth of those it now may claim;
 But then the city, which doth now behold
 Campi, Certaldo's, and Figghine's race, 50
 To the last craftsman had true sons enrolled.

³⁵ The words imply an archaic quasi-Latin form of speech, as contrasted with the later dialects, which are noted in the *V. E.* (i. 13), especially that of Florence, as corrupt and semi-barbarous. Comp. C. xv. 28.

³⁷ The date of Cacciaguida's birth is given, after Dante's manner, astronomically. In *Conv.* ii. 15 he gives the revolution of Mars as "about two years." The *Almagest* of Ptolemy, translated into Latin in 1230, and the basis of all Dante's astronomical knowledge, gives 686 days. Taking the reading "*e trenta*" in l. 38, this would give A.D. 1090-91 as the date of birth, or taking "*e tre*," A.D. 1033. The former date leads to the conclusion that Conrad III. was the Emperor under whom Cacciaguida fought. The latter would make Conrad II.'s Crusade take place in Cacciaguida's infancy. *Scart.* is driven to the conjecture that Dante blundered in his chronology, or mixed up the two Conrads. The constellation Leo is named as that whose name made it the appropriate *terminus a quo* and *ad quem* of the orbit of Mars.

⁴⁰ The home of Cacciaguida is defined as in the last region reached in the annual races which were run on the Festival of St. John Baptist. This was near the Porta San Pietro, in the Piazza opposite the Church of San Martin, near the street which leads to the Mercato Vecchio. Here the house shown as Dante's still stands. See the plans of ancient Florence in *Phil.* and Witte, *D. F.* ii. 1, and Reumont (*Dante's Familie* in *D. Gesell.* ii. p. 333).

⁴² What was the reason of Cacciaguida's, *i.e.*, of Dante's, reticence? Was it that his ancestors were immigrants too obscure to notice, or so illustrious (Romans, Elisei, or Frangipani, or the like) that it would be vainglorious to speak of them? I incline, looking to the use of the same formula in *H.* iv. 104, and to the same feeling in *V. N.* c. 29, to the latter view, but it is, of course, impossible to do more than guess. *H.* xv. 61-78 is, of course, in favour of the view I have taken. Commentators, early and late, vary widely.

⁴⁶ The statue of Mars on the Ponte Vecchio and the Baptistery are named as the limits north and south. Those on the east and west were the gates of St. Piero and St. Pancrazio.

⁴⁸ The number of citizens of military age at Florence in 1300 is estimated at 30,000 (*Scart.*) Dante, with or without data, reckons it as 6000 at the time of Cacciaguida's birth.

⁴⁹ Campi is a small town in the Val d'Arno about nine miles from Florence. Certaldo, the birthplace of Boccaccio, in the Val d'Elsa (*Purg.* xxxiii. 67); Figghine, between

Oh, how much better that such people's place
 Should still remain in outward neighbourhood,
 And at Galuzz' and Trespiano trace
 Your bounds, than tolerate that stinking brood, 55
 The churls of Signa and Aguglion,
 Who for corruption have keen eyes and good !
 Had not the race that most debased hath grown
 In all the world, to Cæsar step-dame been,
 But kind as is a mother to her son, 60
 Then some who buy and sell as Florentine
 Would have turned back again to Simifonti,
 Where once their grandsires were as beggars seen ;
 At Montemurlo still would be the Conti,
 The Cerchi would in Acon's parish be, 65
 In Grieve's vale, may be, the Buondelmonti.
 In blending with new races still we see,
 As ever, cause of all our city's woes,
 As with the body mixed meats ill agree :
 And a blind bull more headlong downfall shows 70
 Than a blind lamb ; and oft one sword will try
 The might of five with more incisive blows.

Pontasieve and Arezzo. Immigrants from these places had, in Dante's view, corrupted the purity of Florentine blood. Comp. *H.* xv. 62, where a like corruption is traced to the immigrants from Fiesole.

⁵³ Galluzzo, on the road to Siena, two miles from Florence ; Trespiano, in the Val d'Arno, four miles. Extended boundaries had brought in a lower class of citizens.

⁵⁴ The two men held up to infamy are Ubaldo of Aguglione (*π.* on *Purg.* xii. 105), one of the Priori in 1311, and Bonifazio of Signa, a judge notorious for his venality, both probably belonging to the Neri, who had condemned Dante for that fault. *D. C.* (i. p. 16) mentions a Pino of Signa. One notes the fact that Dante charges his opponent with the very crime for which he had himself been condemned (*Frat. V. D.* p. 147).

⁵⁵ The evils of Florence are traced to the vices of the clergy. The Church proved herself not the nursing mother of the Empire, but its stepmother, hostile, envious, cruel. The theory of the *Monarchia* had not been recognised. Florence had been the leader of the league of Tuscany and Romagna against Henry VII.

⁵⁶ We are left to guess who is alluded to. Conjectures have identified him with one of the Pitti family, who surrendered Simifonti to the Florentines in 1202, who in 1300 was one of the wealthy merchants of that city. The sinner in l. 63 implies that he was little more than a beggar in his native village.

⁵⁷ The Conti Guidi in 1207 sold Montemurlo, between Pistoia and Prato, to the Florentines, who had helped them to recover it from the first of those cities (*Vill.* v. 31). The Cerchi came from Acone on its capture by the Florentines, settled in Florence in 1053 (*Vill.* iv. 37), and became rich. Dante, though he belonged to the same party, seems to have looked on the Cerchi with special disfavour (*H.* iii. 35 *π.*)

⁵⁸ The Buondelmonti in like manner occupied Monte Buono, in the valley of the Grieve, till in 1135 it was taken by the Florentines, and its inhabitants compelled to settle in their city (*Vill.* iv. 36). It was to a member of that family that Dante looked as the source of all the factions that had marred the prosperity of Florence (l. 140).

⁵⁹ In this mingling of men of different origins and habits Dante sees the beginning of confusion. Mere material greatness did but increase that confusion and the disasters that followed from it. One keen sword wielded by the hand of a true soldier was worth more than five in the hands of a degenerate populace. The precise number refers to l. 48.

If Luni, Urbisaglia, thou descry,
 How they have fall'n, or are in act to fall,
 Chiusi, Sinigaglia, following nigh, 75
 To learn how races wither, one and all,
 Will not seem strange to thee, nor hard to hear,
 Since Time e'en cities to their end doth call.
 All that is yours the doom of death must bear,
 As ye yourselves, but this is hid from view 80
 In what lasts long, so short your own career.
 And as from changes of the moon ensue
 The ceaseless flux and reflux on the shore,
 So Fortune works on Florence and on you :
 Wherefore it should seem wonderful no more 85
 That which I tell of older Florentines,
 Whose fame is now more hidden than of yore.
 The Ughi, Alberichi, Catellines,
 Filippi, Greci, Ormanni I found,
 E'en in their fall illustrious citizens ; 90
 And saw, time-honoured and with glory crowned,
 Sannella's, Arca's house, Bostichi, yea,
 Ardinghi and Soldanier' renowned.

⁷⁵ An induction is drawn from the fortunes of others. Luni (*H.* xx. 47), on the Magra, in the region of Carrara, whose history tradition carried up to the time of the Trojan war, had dwindled to insignificance (*Vill.* i. 50). Dante, it will be remembered, had found a refuge with the Malaspini of the Lunigiana (vol. i. p. lxxxv). Urbisaglia, once famous as the *Urbs Salvia* of *Plin.* iii. 111, in the March of Ancona, had shared the same fate. Chiusi, the *Clusium* of *Lars Porsena* (*Liv.* ii. 9; *Strabo*, v. 226), and Sinigaglia, the *Sena Gallica* of *Plin.* iii. 113, in Romagna, on the shores of the Adriatic, were in Dante's time examples of the decline and fall of greatness. All human greatness was, indeed, transitory, but in some instances the slowness of change gave a show of permanence. (So Aquinas, "*Perpetuo homo non manet; etiam ipsa civitas deficit.*"—*Summ.* iii., *Suppl.* 99, 1.)

⁸⁰ The lunar theory of the tides is stated in Dante's treatise of *De Aquâ et Terrâ*, c. 7. So Fortune (*H.* vii. 62) rules the tides in the affairs of men.

⁸⁵ It lies in the nature of the case that but little can be known of those who are named as already half forgotten, but the passage is interesting as showing Dante's study of the archaeology of his beloved city. We may compare the lists with those in *Vill.* iv. 10-13; *Malisp.* c. 76, 100, 103. The Ughi were known as the builders of the Church of S. Maria that bears their name in Faenza. They and the Catellini were sent into exile (*Vill.* iv. 12). The Filippi once occupied the quarter of the Porta S. Maria in the Mercato Nuovo. The Greci gave their name to a Borgo of Florence (*Vill.* iv. 13). The Ormanni once dwelt on the site of the Palazzo del Popolo; they had changed their name to Foraboschi (*Vill.* iv. 13). The Church of S. Maria Alberighi preserved the name of that family, which in Dante's time was extinct (*Vill.* iv. 11). Of the Sannella (*Vill.* iv. 13) and Arca (*Vill.* iv. 12) families, all we know is that the *Offt.* mentions that their descendants were living in Florence in poverty. The Soldanieri had been banished as Ghibellines (*Vill.* iv. 12; *H.* xxxii. 121). The Ardinghi were Guelphs and neighbours of the Alighieri near the Porta S. Piero (*Vill.* iv. 11); the Bostichi Guelphs were banished after Montaperti (*Vill.* vi. 80). The alternate triumphs of the two parties had been fatal to the leading families of both.

Nigh to the gate on which there now doth stay
 New felony so heavy in its weight, 98
 'Twill sink our good ship at no distant day,
 There were the Ravignani, of whose state
 Count Guido is the heir, and who doth own
 The name that old Bellincion' made great.
 To him of Della Pressa then was known 100
 How men are ruled, and Galigaio bare
 A hilt and sword-guard where the bright gold shone.
 Great even then the column miniver,
 Sacchetti, Giuochi, Fifanti, Barucci,
 Galli, and those who blush for bushel there. 105
 The stock from which have sprung the Calfucci
 Was great e'en then, and to the curule chair
 Were led the Sizi and the Arrigucci.
 Ah me! what men I saw who now ill fare
 Through their own pride, and how the balls of gold 110
 Enflowered our Florence with deeds great and rare.

⁹⁴ The gate is that of St. Peter, but a *v. l.* gives *poppe* instead of *porta*. The "felony" is that of the Cerchi (*Vill.* viii. 38), but some commentators (*But.*, *Anon. Fior.*) connect it with the Bardi (the family of Beatrice's husband), and others with the Donati. As a matter of fact, the houses of the Ravignani passed into the hands of the Counts Guidi in 1280, and afterwards into those of the Cerchi. To this house belonged the Bellincione Berti of C. xv. 112, the father of Gualdrada (*H.* xvi. 37), and through her the ancestor of the Counts Guidi of the Casentino (*H.* xxx. 65; *Purg.* v. 94, xiv. 43).

¹⁰⁰ The house of Della Pressa belonged to the Ghibellines, who were banished in 1258, and shared in the victory of Montaperti. They had been among the official families of Florence (*Vill.* vi. 65, 78). The gilded hilt and pommel of the Galigai showed they were knights. They too were Ghibellines, and lived in the quarter of the Porta S. Piero (*Vill.* v. 39, vi. 33, 65).

¹⁰⁵ As in *H.* xvii. 55-66, Dante shows himself an expert in the armorial bearings of Florence. The "column" (corresponding to the "pale" of English heraldry) of ermine was borne by the Pigli (*Vill.* iv. 12, v. 39). With these are joined one Guelph and three Ghibelline families, who are nothing more than the shadow of a name. The *Novelle* of Sacchetti, which include some Dante anecdotes, have redeemed one of them from oblivion (*Vill.* iv. 13, v. 39, vi. 79). The Giuochi were Ghibellines (*Vill.* iv. 11, v. 39, vi. 33), as also were the Fifanti (*Vill.* iv. 13, v. 38, vi. 65), and the Barucci (*Vill.* iv. 10, v. 39, vi. 33).

¹⁰⁸ The fact referred to is the falsification of the public standard of weights by one of the Chiamontese (*Purg.* xii. 105), who were Guelphs (*Vill.* iv. 11, v. 39).

¹⁰⁶ The Calfucci were sprung from the same stock as the Donati, but dwindled and decayed while their other branch rose to power (*Vill.* iv. 10). Both the Arrigucci and the Sizi are said to have been Guelphs (*Vill.* iv. 10, v. 39). Some of the former, however, joined the Bianchi (*Vill.* vii. 39).

¹⁰⁹ The next family are described, not named, and the description identifies them with the Uberti, the haughtiest of all the older noblesse (*Vill.* i. 41, iv. 3, 13, *et al.*; *H.* vi. 80, x. 32). The balls of gold on a field azure were the arms of the Lamberti. They were Ghibellines, and came originally from Germany (*Vill.* iv. 12). Mosca (*H.* vi. 80, xxviii. 106) belonged to this house.

So lived and wrought their ancestors of old,
 Who, when your Church presents a vacant see,
 Grow fat, as they their consistory hold.
 The haughty race which dragons it when flee 115
 The weak before it, and for those who show
 Or teeth or purse, like lamb goes peaceably,
 E'en then was rising, but from lineage low,
 So that Ubert' Donati took it ill
 Through his wife's father kinship's claims to owe. 120
 And Caponsacco did the market fill,
 From Fiesole descending, and there too
 Were Giuda, Infangato, worthy still.
 A thing I'll tell incredible, yet true :
 One entered the small circle by a gate 125
 Which men as named from Della Pera knew.
 Each one of those who bear the arms of state
 Of that great Baron, whose high praise and name
 The feast of Thomas yet doth celebrate,
 Received from him their knighthood and their fame, 130
 Though with the people he is closely bound,
 Who now with bordure doth ensign the same.

115 The Visdomini (*Vill.* iv. 10, v. 39), Feringhi (*ibid.*), Alietti, and Cortigiani are named by the early commentators as the patrons and defenders of the Episcopate. Their function was to take possession of the Bishop's palace during a vacancy, and to hold it, not without dinners and suppers at the cost of the see, till a successor was appointed.

116 The "brood" are identified with the Adimari (*Vill.* iv. 11, v. 39), who, in a branch known as Cavicciuoli have Filippo Argenti (*H.* viii. 61) as their representative in the *Commedia*. Adimari is said by Boccaccio to have been put in possession of Dante's property, and to have been foremost in opposing any proposals for his recall from exile. Hence perhaps the emphasised bitterness of the poet's tone in speaking of his family. In Cacciaguida's time they were emerging from obscurity, but Ubertino Donati, who had married a daughter of Bellincione Berti, is said to have objected to Berti's giving another daughter to one of the Adimari, on the ground that the family were of inferior rank.

121 For Dante's view of the immigrants from Fiesole, see *H.* xv. 62. The Caponsacchi were Ghibellines, and settled in the Mercato Vecchio (*Vill.* iv. 11, v. 39). Beatrice's mother was of that house. Giuda's family is named by *Mulisp.* (c. 137), but not by Villani. They are said (*Ott.*) to have been banished with the Cerchi.

124 Those of Pera are said to have been the Peruzzi, who joined the Bianchi (*Vill.* iv. 13, viii. 12, 62, 71, *et al.*), and who gave their name to the Porta Peruzzi. What was the incredible thing? It may have been (1) that the Porta named should then have been one of the outer gates of a city which had grown so large; (2) that the state of Florence was so peaceful that no offence was taken at a gate being named after a private family; (3) that a family once so important as to have a gate named after them was now scarcely heard of. *Lis sub judice*. I incline to (2).

127 The great baron was Hugh, Marquis of Brandenburg, who lived and died at Florence as Vicar of the Emperor Otto III. He made many knights of the Pulci, Nerli, Gangalandi, Giandonati, and the Della Bella families, all of whom, in honour of his memory, quartered his arms with theirs (*Vill.* iv. 2). He sold his German estates, and, having no heir, endowed seven abbeys with the proceeds. He died on St. Thomas's day, 1106, and a solemn mass for his soul was said on that festival in the Abbey of S. Maria at Florence.

128 Probably a hit at Gian della Bella, the author of the democratic ordinances of justice

The Gualterotti then were famous found,
 And Importuni; quiet now would be
 The Burgh, but for new neighbours that abound. 125
 The house whence sprang your wail of misery,
 Through the just wrath that hath left many dead,
 And put an end to life passed joyously,
 On others and itself all honour shed.
 O Buondelmonte, to what issue bad 140
 Wast thou to leave thy bride by others led!
 Many had then rejoiced who now are sad,
 If God to Ema's waters thee had thrown,
 When first to thee our city welcome bade.
 But it was meet that by that broken stone 145
 That guards the bridge thou should'st a victim fall
 To Florence, when her peace was all but gone.
 With these I name, with others, like in all,
 I Florence saw in such profound repose
 She had no need in weeping loud to call; 150
 With such as these a people glorious
 And just I saw, whose lily ne'er was known
 To hang inverted on the spear of foes,
 Nor by division turned vermilion."

(*Vill.* viii. 1-8) in 1293. He too bore the arms of the great baron surrounded by a golden border, and yet united himself with the people against the nobles. The fact that Gian della Bella was exiled in 1295 is hardly enough to set aside a conjecture so natural in itself.

¹²⁵ The Gualterotti and Importuni who were Guelphs (*Vill.* iv. 13, v. 39), were of the Borgo degli Apostoli. The words that follow point to the Buondelmonti, who settled at a later period (1235) in the same Borgo, and who were conspicuous in the tragedy referred to in *H.* xxviii. 106, and thus became disturbers of the peace of Florence.

¹³⁶ This was the Ghibelline house of the Amidei (*Vill.* v. 38, 39, vi. 6c). Buondelmonte had agreed to marry a daughter of that house by way of making amends for having wounded her brother in a brawl, and this was the beginning of the dark history of that Easter Day of 1215.

¹⁴⁰ The Ema was a stream flowing near the castle of Montebuono (destroyed in 1235; *Vill.* iv. 36). The form of Dante's statement suggests that *the* Buondelmonte of the tragedy had been nearly drowned in it when he first left the old home of his fathers to come to Florence; but nothing is known.

¹⁴⁵ The statue of Mars haunts Dante's thoughts, as in *H.* xiii. 143-150. The murder of Buondelmonte took place close to the statue (*Vill.* v. 38), as though the old god of war demanded a victim. One notes the pregnant force of the phrase, the "last peace." The murder had been as "the beginning of troubles."

¹⁴⁸ Dante, through Cacciaguida, looks back upon "the good old days" of Florence, as he looked forward to the future of the "Greyhound" reformer (*H.* i. 101). Memory and hope are always the regions in which the idealist moves most freely. What is for us an almost tedious list of half-forgotten names was for him full of historic memories. The old records of Florence attested their greatness. Faction, strife, mutual decrees of banishment had brought them to decay, and they had vanished, or were vanishing, from the stage on which they had played their part. *Malisp.* c. 52, 53, 54, 55, 61, 103, 137, presents many interesting points of contact.

¹⁵⁴ The white lily on a red shield had been the old standard of Florence. On the expulsion of the Ghibellines in 1251, the Guelphs, who remained in possession, changed the arms of the city to a red lily on a white shield, the exiles continuing faithful to the old arms, which

CANTO XVII.

Cacciaguida—Prophecy of Dante's Exile—Can Grande della Scala.

As he who came to ask of Clymene
 If what against himself he heard were true,
 He through whom sires to sons so grudging be,
 So was I, and e'en thus I stood in view
 Of Beatrice and of that blest light, 5
 That for my sake had changed its station due.
 Wherefore my Lady spake: "Give vent outright
 To thy desire's strong flame, that it may be
 Stamped with the mark of all thine inner might.
 Not that through any speech of thine do we 10
 Gain greater knowledge, but that thou may'st learn
 To tell thy thirst, that we give drink to thee."
 "O my dear Root, who such high place dost earn,
 That, as our minds, to earthly senses tied,
 That angles twain obtuse can't be, discern 13
 In one triangle, thus thou hast espied
 Contingent things ere they in being are,
 Gazing where all times in one Now abide.
 While I did Virgil's welcome presence share
 Up on the mount which heals the souls that fall, 20
 Or through the dead world's lowest depths did fare,

thus became the badge of their Ghibellinism (*Vil.* vi. 43). Till that change, Dante implies, all had gone well with Florence in her wars with neighbouring states. Afterwards there was nothing but disaster. So in *Ep.* i. he speaks of "*candida nostra signa*."

¹ Phaethon, who, on hearing his divine parentage denied by Epaphus, came to his mother Clymene to ask if he were indeed the son of Apollo, and who asked, as a proof of sonship, that he might drive the chariot of the sun (*Met.* i. 748, ii. 328), comes before Dante's mind as the type of his own eager desire to know more. In his case, however, the desire points to the future, and not to the past. Comp. *H.* xvii. 107; *Purg.* iv. 72, xxix. 119.

² The words have obviously a deeper meaning than lies on the surface, and point to the great mystery of all prayer. We do not utter our desires to make them known to Him who "knows our necessities before we ask," but in order that we may learn the habit of confiding trust in the Love that is "always more ready to hear than we to pray."

³ To the souls who see all things in the mirror of the Divine Mind, what are to us contingent facts are as certain as what we know as the necessary truths of mathematics, such, e.g., as that the three angles of a triangle are always equal to two right angles, and therefore that there cannot be in any triangle two obtuse angles.

⁴ We are thrown back on *Purg.* viii. 133-139, xi. 140, 141, xxiv. 43-48; *H.* x. 79-81, 124-126, xv. 61-78, 86-96. In *H.* x. 130, xv. 88, Beatrice had been named as the oracle that was to foretell the future, and we have to assume either (1) that Dante had forgotten this, or (2) that he changed his purpose, as thinking that the prediction came better from the lips of Cacciaguida than from her who was now the representative of the highest form of Divine Wisdom. I incline to (2).

Of what may me in future years befall
 Grave words were spoken to me, though I feel
 Set firm, four square, 'gainst fate's blows one and all.
 Wherefore I fain would learn the woe or weal 23
 That Fortune brings me in the coming day;
 A dart foreseen a weaker stroke doth deal."
 Thus spake I then to that same shining ray
 Which with me spake before, and so my mind,
 As Beatrice willed, did I display. 30
 Not in dark speech, as when the nations blind
 Were snated ere yet the Lamb of God was slain
 That takes away the sin of all mankind,
 But in clear utterance, open speech and tone,
 Made answer to me that paternal love, 35
 Close hidden, yet by smiling radiance known.
 "Contingency, which doth not pass above
 The book of sensuous knowledge, all doth lie
 Before His gaze in whom the ages move,
 But not from thence it takes necessity, 40
 No more than from the eye by which 'tis seen,
 A ship that on strong current sweepeth by.

²³ The phrase comes through Aristotle (*Rhet.* iii. 2, *Eth. Nic.* i. 10) from Simonides (Plato, *Protag.* 344 A). The perfect cube was an emblem of completest stability. We note the proud self-consciousness with which Dante claims it for himself. Gregory the Great (*Hom.* xxi.) had applied it to the "saints of God."

²⁸ The proverb has been ascribed (*Daniello*) to Ovid, but is not found in his works—

"*Nam prævisa minus lacerare tela solent.*"

³¹ The two classical instances were probably present to Dante's mind. (1) The Delphic oracle to Croesus, that if he crossed the Halys he would destroy a great kingdom (*Herod.* i. 53), which he may have read in Cic. *De Div.* ii. 56, and the "*Aio te, Æacide, Romanos vincere posse,*" which was said to have been given to Pyrrhus.

³³ Dante, like Milton in his *Ode on the Nativity*, assumed the tradition that the oracles had ceased after the Crucifixion. The legend first appears in Plut. *De Def. Orac.* and Euseb. *Præp. Evang.*, bk. v.

³⁴ "*Latin,*" used for "*Italian,*" as in C. xii. 144.

³⁷ Contingency—that which, from our standpoint, may or may not come to pass—is ever present in the eternal Now of the mind of God. So far the sense is clear. The other words specify the character of the contingent matters referred to as belonging to the future. That lies beyond the limits of man's knowledge, and must, because future, be contingent to him, while past events lose even for him the contingent character which they once had and become objective facts. The "book" to which man's knowledge is thus compared is one made of a single quire of paper, the metaphor pointing to the narrow limits of that knowledge. Comp. C. xxxiii. 85-87.

⁴⁰ Few profound thinkers have failed to seek to solve the problem of "fixed fate, free-will, fore-knowledge absolute." Few attempts have shown a more subtle fancy than this. We see a ship gliding on the sea. Our sight does not affect its motion. God sees eternally the great stream of the events which are manifested in time, yet they are not therefore necessitated by Him. Comp. Milton, *P. L.* ii. 860, iii. 117.

Thence, as the ear a concord sweet doth glean
 From organ-notes, there comes within my sight
 The future that for thee prepared hath been. 45
 As Hippolyt from Athens took his flight,
 Through step-dame's cruel hate and perfidy,
 So thou must Florence leave in thy despite;
 Thus men have willed, for this their arts they ply:
 And soon the end will come which now they seek, 50
 Where even Christ men daily sell and buy.
 And blame, as it is wont, its rage doth wreak
 On those who suffer wrong, but Vengeance high
 Shall to the Truth Who sends it witness speak.
 Thou shalt leave all things that most tenderly 55
 Are loved by thee; and this is from the bow
 Of exile the first arrow that doth fly.
 How salt that bread doth taste thou then shalt know
 That others give thee, and how hard the way
 Or up or down another's stairs to go. 60

⁴⁴ The reference to the organ may be compared with *Purg.* ix. 144. They were obviously common in the larger Italian churches in Dante's time.

⁴⁵ Hippolytus was banished by his father Theseus because his stepmother Phædra, who wished to seduce him, charged him with attempting to seduce her (*Met.* xv. 493-514). Such a stepmother Florence had proved in banishing Dante on the charge of peculation. The last line of the passage referred to, "*Immeritumque pater profecit ab urbe*," connects itself with Dante's frequent description of himself as "*immeritus exul*" (*Epp.* ii. 1, iv. 1, v. 1). For the "stepmother" metaphor, comp. C. xvi. 59.

⁴⁶ We are thrown back upon the Florentine politics of 1300, when Boniface VIII. was already scheming to send Charles of Valois to crush the opposition of which Dante was one of the foremost leaders. The words gain a special significance if we remember that Dante was probably at Rome at the assumed date of the prophecy (see vol. i. p. lxxv.) "Christ bought and sold" points, of course, to the simony which was rampant at Rome (*H.* xix. 1-75).

⁴⁷ Scart. quotes an Italian proverb, "*La colpa è sempre degli offesi*." Boeth. i. 4 may have been in Dante's mind, "*Hoc tantum dixerim ultimam esse adversæ fortune sarcinam, quod dum miseris aliquod crimen affigitur, quæ perferunt meruisse creduntur*." Possibly the *res victis* of Brennus (*Liv.* v. 48) was in Dante's thoughts, or *Ecclus.* xiii. 17. The "vengeance" spoken of may be found either in the great catastrophe of the Ponte Carraia in 1304 (*Vill.* viii. 70), or the defeats referred to in *H.* v. 64-72, or the great fire in the same year (*Vill.* viii. 71). Possibly he may allude more specifically to the death of Simeon, son of Corso Donati, red-handed from a wound inflicted by Niccolò de' Cerchi, whom he had attacked and assassinated without provocation (*Vill.* viii. 49). See vol. i. p. lxxxiii.

⁴⁸ Even the most sceptical of cynical critics will admit that it is at least possible that Dante may have included wife and children among the things beloved by him. He could hardly, we may add, have referred to house or goods, or the first seven Cantos of the *Commedia* (!) Possibly his "beautiful St. John's" (*H.* xix. 17) may have been also in his thoughts.

⁴⁹ No lines in the *Commedia* have been so often in men's mouths as these. Men have found in them a sorrow's crown of sorrow, the very dregs of the cup of bitterness. This was in his mind even when he was an honoured guest in the palaces of Verona or Ravenna. The same thought had been uttered before by Seneca, "*Vita . . . illorum miserrima qui ad alienum somnium dormiunt, et ad aliorum appetitum comedunt et bibunt*." Possibly also *Ecclus.* xiii. 1-13 may have been verified by Dante's experience.

And that which most upon thy back shall weigh
 Will be the mad and evil company
 Which in that dreary vale with thee shall stay ;
 For they ungrateful, impious, base to thee
 Shall prove ; yet but a little while attend, 65
 And they, not thou, shall blush for infamy.
 And of that brute stupidity their end
 Shall furnish proof, and well with thee 'twill fare
 Apart from them thy lonely path to wend.
 Thy first home, first asylum, shall be there 70
 Found in the great Lombard's kind courtesy,
 Whose ladder doth the holy eagle bear.
 He shall cast on thee so benign an eye
 That, 'twixt you twain, to ask and act shall take
 Far other place than elsewhere men desery. 75
 One too thou'lt see on whom this star did make
 Such impress when his birth was nigh at hand
 That his great deeds shall soon men's wonder wake.
 Not yet his worth the nations understand
 By reason of his youth, for scarce nine years 80
 These spheres have round him their full circuit spanned.

⁶³ The six hundred Bianchi-Ghibellines who were sharers of Dante's exile, intriguing, conspiring, self-seeking, with no real loyalty to the Emperor, on the theory of the *Monarchid*, were as far as possible from being congenial companions. Among them we may note were the Cerchi (*H.* iii. 35 s.), the Tosinghi, the Adimari and Lapo Salterello (*C.* xv. 128 ; *D.* C. ii. p. 273). So Villani (*viii.* 49) speaks of the Bianchi as "proud and ungrateful," and applies to them the proverb, "*Quem deus vult perdere, prius dementat*" (*Vill.* viii. 72).

⁶⁶ The failure of the plots of the exiles, in which Dante implicitly declares that he had not shared, should make them blush for shame. The words are probably a disclaimer of the attacks which the more desperate Bianchi made on Florence, and in which Dante was accused of being a sharer (*vol.* i. p. lxxxii.)

⁶⁹ The sense of isolation, from one point of view the bitterest of trials, is from another a source of satisfaction. We remember Dante's words at an earlier stage of his career when he was asked to go as ambassador to Rome : "If I go, who remains? If I remain, who is there to go?" In his aspirations after an ideal monarchy under Henry VII., Dante had probably stood absolutely alone, with the one exception of the Emperor himself.

⁷¹ The "great Lombard" is obviously one of the Scaligeri of Verona, either Albert (*d.* 1301), the father of Bartolomeo (*d.* 1304), Alboin, (*d.* 1311), and Francesco, or Can Grande, or one of the three—say most probably Bartolomeo. It has been urged against this that the eagle did not appear on their shields till after the appointment of the last as Imperial Vicar ; but the fact is doubtful. Dante could hardly have been mistaken. The eagle, indeed, is not found on the tomb of Can Grande himself. The words imply a visit to Verona in 1302 or 1303. For Dante's first impressions see *vol.* i. p. lxxx. and *Ep.* xi. 1. The thought of l. 74 is from Seneca, *De Benef.*

⁷⁶ The stellar influences are recognised again. Can Grande, who is here spoken of, was born when Mars was in the ascendant. *Comp.* *H.* xv. 55.

⁷⁹ The natural interpretation of the words is that Can Grandè was nine years old at the assumed date of the vision, 1300. It has been contended, but on insufficient grounds, that Dante speaks of the biennial revolution of the sphere of Mars, and that Can Grande was therefore born *circa* 1280-81.

But ere the Gascon's fraud great Henry nears,
 Some sparks of valour shall their brightness show,
 In that he gold contemns nor labour fears.
 And soon so well shall men his greatness know, 85
 Excelling all, that e'en from enemies,
 Their silence breaking, shall his praises flow.
 Wait thou for him and for his charities;
 Through him shall many a nation changes see,
 The rich brought low, the poor to honour rise. 90
 And written in thy mind this too shall be,
 Yet tell it not;" and then he spake of things
 Which men shall see with incredulity.
 Then added he, "My son, this issue brings
 The key to what was told thee: see the snares 95
 Which a few years shall bear upon their wings.
 Yet look not on thy mates with envious cares;
 Thy life projects itself through many a year
 Beyond the vengeance which their guilt prepares."
 When that blest soul by silence showed full clear 100
 That he had worked with woof the web to fill
 Which I with warp had set before him there,
 I then began as one who, doubting still,
 Desireth counsel for his doubts from one
 Who sees things justly, loves with heart and will: 105
 "Well see I, O my sire, how spurreth on
 Time's course against me, to strike such a blow
 As heaviest falls on him whose strength is gone,

⁸² The allusion fixes the date of the *Paradiso* as after the first check given to Henry VII., if not, as seems more probable, after his death. The Gascon is Clement V., who first sanctioned Henry's election as King of the Romans, and ostensibly supported his enterprise, and afterwards coalesced with Robert, king of Naples, and the Florentine league against him (vol. i. pp. xciii.-xcix.) Before that time the virtues of Can Grande should begin to show themselves. If we assume Can Grande to have been the "greyhound" of *H.* i. 101, Dante must have seen, with his quick discernment of boy nature, the promise of his future greatness.

⁸³ Probably, like the "greyhound" passage of *H.* i., an unfulfilled prophecy of a revolution for which Dante hoped, which should substitute his ideal Empire, with its Liberty, Equality, Fraternity (*Mon.* i. 14), for the dominant plutocracy of the Guelph cities and the usurpations of the Roman *Curia*.

⁸⁴ We note the emphasis of reticence as to the hopes over which the poet's mind was still brooding even in 1318-19, when he wrote the latter part of the *Paradiso*. They were probably connected with Can Grande's appointment as Imperial Vicar in 1318.

⁸⁵ The decree which banished Dante from Florence has January 7, 1302, for its date. He would live long enough (*C.* xxxi. 37) to see her punished for her malignity. The words may be either a prophecy *ex eventu*, like l. 53, or an unfulfilled anticipation.

¹⁰⁰ Forewarned is forearmed. What Dante shrank from was drifting with the stream of circumstance. Was his Master's line floating in his thoughts.

"*Tu ne cede malis, sed contra audentior ito.*"

Wherefore 'tis well foreknowledge arm me so,
 That, if from home most dear I fain must flee, 110
 I may not others through my rhymes forego.
 Down in the world of endless misery,
 And on the mountain from whose summit bright
 The eyes of my dear Lady lifted me,
 And afterwards in Heaven from light to light, 115
 I have learnt that which, if again I tell,
 Like herbs of pungent taste, 'twill many bite.
 Yet if to truth a timid friend I dwell,
 I fear lest I should lose my life with those
 Who shall this age as ancient chronicle." 120
 The light—where, smiling, my own treasure rose
 New-found—flashed forth at first all glorified,
 As in the sun's ray golden mirror glows ;
 Then answer made : " Only a conscience dyed,
 Or with its own or with another's blame, 125
 Will feel thy speech grate harshly on its pride ;
 Yet not the less, all falsehood put to shame,
 Make thou thy vision fully manifest,
 And where the sore is let each scratch the same.
 For if thy voice and speech do much molest, 130
 When tasted first, a vital nutriment
 'Twill leave behind when men thy words digest.
 And this thy cry shall like the wind be sent,
 That most wrecks heights that tower most loftily,
 Which is of honour no small argument. 135

Line 121 suggests the thought that he had already made enemies by the sharp-pointed satire of the *Commedia*. Might he not be expelled from other cities less dear than Florence, and be altogether homeless? Against that issue he will strive to guard.

¹¹² The words that follow are an *apologia* for the bitterness with which he had spoken in the *Commedia*, not of individuals only, but of communities, as of Siena (*H.* xxix. 121-139), Pistoia (*H.* xxv. 10), Pisa (*H.* xxxiii. 79-90). Might not those verses set every man's hand, and close the gates of every city, against him? Prudence would counsel reticence and suppression (we may, I think, infer that the earlier parts of the poem had not as yet been, in any real sense, published), but then there comes the thought of the immortality of fame. What timid friend of truth ever attained to that?

¹²¹ Cacciaguida's answer—that of Dante's higher conscience—is that he must do a prophet's work with a prophet's boldness. "Let the galled jade wince." The sword must smite in order that it might heal. The *Commedia* would invert the parable of St. John's volume (*Rev.* x. 10), and, true to its name, as that name is explained in the *Ep.* to C. G. c. 10, be bitter at first, sweet in its after working. It lies in the nature of the case that such an *apologia* was called forth by definite circumstances. Had it been urged on Dante that he might at least suppress what he had said in *Purg.* xviii. 121-125 of Alberto della Scala's illegitimate son? Was he thus striking at the tallest trees? Comp. *Hor. Od.* ii. 10; *Herod.* vii. 10; *Soph. Céd. R.* 874-878.

Hence in these spheres there only meet thine eye,
 As on the Mount and in the dolorous Vale,
 The souls that have acquired celebrity ;
 For still the mind of him who hears a tale
 Rests not, nor gives firm faith to things that rise 140
 From roots unknown and hid beneath a veil,
 Nor other proof that non-apparent lies."

CANTO XVIII.

*The Sixth Heaven, of Jupiter—The Souls of Righteous Kings—
 The Starry Eagle.*

REJOICING in himself at that his speech
 Stood that blest Mirror, and I tasting tried
 The sweet and bitter, tempering each with each ;
 And then that Lady who was still my guide
 To God, said, "Change thy thoughts, and think that He s
 Who lightens every wrong is at my side."
 I turned me to that loving melody
 Of my dear Joy, and what I then saw plain
 Of love in those pure eyes o'ertasketh me ;
 Not only that I feel all words are vain, 10
 But that my mind doth fail to represent
 What soars so far, with none to guide the rein.
 Yet this I can say, and am well content,
 That, gazing on her, all my strong desire
 Was free from every baser element. 15

¹³⁹ The *apologia* is carried farther. It was necessary in all cases to choose prominent examples of the evils which men were to avoid. Only so could the poet point the moral of his tale. This is his defence for passing what seemed to be an irrevocable judgment on individual offenders.

¹ There does not seem any adequate reason for taking "the word" in any other sense (the Word of God, or the inner thought of Cacciaguida) than as that which Dante had heard. His own "word" was obviously an unspoken one. The soul of Cacciaguida is called a mirror (I adopt the reading "*specchio*" rather than "*spirto*") as reflecting the Divine knowledge of the future.

⁴ Beatrice confirms the poet's inner thought. God is with him, and will in due time vindicate him from unjust suspicion. The consciousness of her approval brought with it a satisfaction which was, in the strictest sense of the word, ineffable. Comp. *V. N.* c. 11.

While the eternal joy, whose radiant fire
 In Beatrice shone direct, did me
 With reflex bliss from her fair face inspire,
 She, conquering me with smile all bright to see,
 Thus spoke to me : " Now turn thyself and hear ; 20
 Mine eyes are not sole Paradise for thee."
 As oft with us affections strong appear
 Transparent in our looks, if such their might,
 That all our soul the rapture strong doth share,
 So in the burning of that holy light 25
 To which I turned I did the will descry
 That me to further converse would invite :
 And he began : " In this fifth stage on high
 Of tree that from its summit lives and grows,
 Ne'er sheds its leaf, bears fruit eternally, 30
 Are blessed spirits who, ere yet they rose
 To Heaven, were of such renowned fame
 As on each Muse abundant store bestows.
 Look then where meet the Cross's arms of flame,
 And as from cloud the swift fire darteth by, 35
 So will each do as I shall speak his name."
 Athwart the Cross I saw a swift light fly,
 As he called Joshua's name, nor had the word
 Passed from his lips ere act had met the eye ;
 And as the name of Maccabee I heard, 40
 I saw another move, which circling wound,
 And gladness was the whip which that top stirred.

¹⁸ The "second," *i.e.*, the transfigured, "aspect" of Beatrice reminds us of *Purg.* xxxi. 138.

²¹ What is the meaning of the mysterious sentence? The *Canzone* prefixed to *Conv.* iii., and the comment on it in *Conv.* iii. 8, help us to understand it. There the eyes and the smile which make the Paradise of the seeker after wisdom are the demonstrations of Philosophy. Here there is a recantation of that thought. (1) Dante had learnt to find his Paradise in the joy of the higher Wisdom of which Beatrice was the representative. If I mistake not, there is, however, a more personal reference. Beatrice is still *his* Beatrice, and the lesson that he is taught is that Paradise is not found in the contemplation of any human holiness, however perfect, but in the beatific vision with which the *Paradiso* ends (*C.* xxxiii. 55-145).

²² All Paradise is as the tree of life. The sphere of Mars is its fifth stage. There, in the bright sparks described in *C.* xiv. 100-117 as moving along the arms of the cross, he is taught to recognise the great heroes of the holy wars of all ages—Joshua, Judas Maccabæus, being foremost in the noble army.

⁴² The somewhat homely simile is an echo of *Æn.* vii. 378-383.

So as Orlando's, Charlemagne's names did sound,
 Two more I followed with a keen regard,
 As the eye follows oft the falcon's round ; 45
 Then William drew mine eye, and Renouard,
 And the Duke Godfrey, gazing eagerly
 Upon that Cross, and Robert named Guiscard.
 Then, mingling with the other lights on high,
 The soul that thus had spoken bade me learn 50
 His artist rank 'mong singers of the sky.
 I to the right hand then myself did turn
 To look on Beatrice, and thereby
 By word or act my duty to discern ;
 And in her eyes I saw such brilliancy, 55
 Such joy, that far that vision left behind
 All earliest, latest, wont that met mine eye.
 And as, through feeling pleasure more refined
 As he does good, a man, from day to day,
 Perceives that virtue groweth in his mind, 60
 So I perceived that, as I took my way,
 Revolving with the Heaven the arc had grown,
 As I that Wonder saw more light display.
 And as in one brief moment oft is known
 The change in pale maid's features when that she 65
 The weight of shamefast blush aside hath thrown,

⁴² Charlemagne comes next as the champion of the Church against the Saracens and the Arian Lombards; Orlando or Roland (*H.* xxxi. 18), his nephew, as the chief among his Paladins.

⁴⁵ The poet's love of falconry supplies another image. See notes on *H.* xvii. 127, xxii. 131; *Purg.* xix. 64, *et al.*

⁴⁶ William, Count of Orange, is said to have fought against the Saracens, and finally to have turned hermit and become famous as St. William of the Desert (*Off.*). Rinaldo is said to have been a converted Saracen, who afterwards became William's ally. Dante may have drawn his knowledge of them from one of the cyclic poets, represented in Germany by Wolfram von Eschenbach, who wrote of the achievements of the sons of Emmerich of Narbonne, the father of William (*Phil.*). These are followed by Godfrey of Boulogne, the leader of the first Crusade, and Robert Guiscard, son of Tancred de Hauteville, who conquered the Saracens in Apulia and Calabria, and delivered Gregory VII. when he was imprisoned by the Emperor Henry IV. in the Castle of St. Angelo (1074).

⁵¹ Cacciaguida, *i.e.*, resumed his work as a member of the choir of the blessed spirits.

⁵⁵ The increase of the brightness of Beatrice's eyes corresponds, as before, with the ascent to a higher sphere,—in this instance, to that of Jupiter, the abode of the souls of righteous rulers.

⁶³ So in *V. N.* c. 21, Beatrice had been described as a "new miracle."

⁶⁴ The Heaven of Mars had been fiery red, that of Jupiter is of serenest white. Such is the change from the blush to the normal hue of a fair lady, such as was Beatrice herself (*V. N.* c. 19, 37). The phrase of "well-tempered star" applied to Jupiter, is found in *Conv.* ii. 14, as resting on the authority of Ptolemy. Jupiter, as the sequel shows, is the planet of righteous government. The relation between it and Saturn, as the planet of contemplation, is recognised by Bacon (*Adv. B.* i. vol. i. p. 17).

Such to mine eyes, when I had turned to see,
 Came that star's glow of tempered lustre bright,
 That sixth star which within now harboured me.
 Within that Jovial torch I saw the light, 70
 The sparkling of the love that there did lie,
 Trace out our speech before my wondering sight;
 And, as the birds that from the shore mount high,
 As if rejoicing in their pasture-ground,
 In circle dense or lengthened squadron fly, 75
 So from within those lights, to song's sweet sound,
 The holy creatures flew, and soon full clear
 D. I. and L. by them designed I found.
 First singing sweetly, moved they here and there
 To their own music, then, as they formed one 80
 Of those three letters, paused and silent were.
 O Pegasean Muse, through whom are won
 The glorious gifts which long-lived praises gain,
 As they to states and kingdoms pass them on,
 Illumine me, that I may render plain 85
 Their figures as they come before my thought,
 And let thy might these verses few sustain!
 Then letters fivefold seven in shape they wrought,
 Both consonants and vowels; and I made
 Due note of all as they to me were brought. 90
 "*Diligite iustitiam*" first portrayed,
 Both noun and verb, were seen, as on they passed,
 "*Qui iudicatis terram*" last displayed;
 Then in the M of that fifth word and last
 They stood in order, so that Jupiter 95
 As silver seemed whereon was gold enchased.

70 "Jovial" is used, of course, with a special reference to its etymology.

75 The simile reminds us of *H.* v. 40, 46, 82, as characteristic of the observer of bird-life.

76 The bright lights form themselves successively into letters which give the *Vulg.* of *Wisd.* i. 1 as the right motto, so to speak, of the planet which presides over government, remaining in the order which formed the final capital M. Looking on the transformations which follow,

we have to assume a shape like that of the letter M in mediæval MSS. .

82 The "Pegasean Muse," who gives the long life of fame, is, as in *Purg.* i. 9, Calliope.

91 The words which Dante saw thus formed find a striking parallel in those which Henry VII. had engraved on his seal, "*Iuste iudicate, filii hominum.*" Comp. *Ps.* lvii. 2, *Vulg.* (vol. i. p. cxxix.)

And other lights descending saw I, where
 Was the M's apex, then awhile repose,
 Singing, I deem, the Good that draws them there.
 Then, as we strike a firebrand, and there glows 10
 The soaring flight of sparks innumerable,
 Which, to the foolish, auguries disclose,
 So more than thousand lights were visible,
 Rising and upward leaping, less or more,
 E'en as the Sun that kindles them did will. 105
 And when each rested where it was before,
 I saw an eagle's head and neck appear,
 Formed by the fire-sparks which that semblance bore.
 No need has He of guide who traced it there,
 But Himself guides it, and from Him doth flow 110
 That power which makes each creature's nest its care.
 The other blessed troop, which erst did show,
 Content to be enliled on the M,
 With gentle movement in that track did go.
 O thou sweet star! how many a lucid gem 115
 Then showed me how our justice hath as cause
 The Heaven which thou with brightness dost ingem.
 Wherefore I pray the Mind, which of thy laws
 And power is source, that He should turn His eye
 Whence comes the smoke that fills thy rays with flaws, 120
 That so yet once again His wrath wax high
 'Gainst those who buy and sell within the shrine
 Which martyrdoms and wonders fortify.

¹⁰² One of the popular divinations of Italian peasants was to see in the sparks from a log upon the hearth a prognostic of the number of coins which they would get from any venture in which they were interested.

¹⁰⁷ Other lights crowd upon the summit of the middle line of the , forming (l. 113), an approximation, first, to the *fleur-de-lys* of Florence,  (l. 113), and finally to the head

and wings of an eagle . The order indicates the imperial polity as the ultimate form which was to be dominant over the civil polity of Florence.

¹¹² "Beatitude" stands obviously as a noun of multitude for the company of blessed spirits, who had seemed content to form the *fleur-de-lys*, but now expanded into a higher symbolism.

¹¹⁶ The world was governed rightly when it had wise rulers, and the characters of such rulers were formed by the stellar influences of Jupiter working out the Divine Will. C. iv. 58; H. xxii. 15. Comp. H. xv. 55.

¹²¹ In contrast with the true order, Dante notes once more the corruption of the Roman Curia, as he had seen it in Rome in 1300, and as it was still to be seen at Avignon when he

Ye whom I gaze on; knights of court divine,
 Pray ye for those who yet on earth abide, 125
 Through bad example all gone out of line.
 Of yore men fought with sword upon their side;
 But now, or here or there, they take away
 Bread the kind Father hath to none denied.
 And thou who writest but to blot for pay, 130
 Think thou that Peter and that Paul, who fell
 For vineyard that thou wastest, live away.
 Well canst thou say, "I love the saint so well
 Whose will it was to live apart from all,
 Brought by a dance to death-doom terrible, 135
 That I know not the Fisherman nor Paul."

CANTO XIX.

The Eagle on the Conditions of Salvation—The Hope of the Heathen—Condemnation of Unrighteous Kings.

THEN met my gaze, with outspread open wing,
 That image fair which to fruition sweet
 The joyous souls enwreathed in it doth bring,

wrote. What was needed was another expulsion of those that sold and bought in the Temple (*Matt.* xxi. 12; *John* ii. 13).

¹²⁸ The words seem to imply something more than a general protest against the lavish use of interdicts and excommunications, which had been so prominent in the conflict between the Popes and the Emperors, or even in the dealings of the former with the citizens of Florence. Had Dante himself been threatened with excommunication for the heresies of the *De Monarchia*, which was afterwards placed on the Roman Index of forbidden books?

¹³⁰ The invective is addressed to a Pope living, not at the assumed date of the vision, but when the *Paradise* was actually written, probably to John XXII. the Cahorsine (C. xxvii. 58). Of all Popes, none were so lavish in their use of spiritual weapons for temporal ends (*Vill.* ix., x., *passim*), none were so conspicuous for their accumulated wealth (*Vill.* xi. 20), vol. i. p. cxvi. The special taunt may refer either to vacillations of policy generally, or to the fact that interdicts and the like were for the most part quickly withdrawn for an adequate consideration.

¹³⁴ The image of the Baptist was stamped on the florins coined in Florence and current throughout Italy (*Vill.* vi. 53). This, Dante says, was the object of the Pope's devotion, of which he gave a practical proof by coining gold florins at Avignon exactly like those of Florence, save that on the reverse or lily side he stamped his own name, "Joannes;" but this was in 1323, after Dante's death (*Vill.* ix. 171).

¹³⁵ I half incline to think that the mention of "dances" may be an oblique hit at the lascivious banquets of the Avignon prelates described by Petrarch (*Milm.* L. C. vii. 152). To the Baptist those dances brought martyrdom. There was no risk of that with his namesake.

¹³⁶ For the "Fisherman" see *Purg.* xxii. 63. The form "*Polò*" in the Italian, for "*Paolo*," is said to be Venetian, as in Marco Polo. Was Dante reproducing a like Gascon or Provençal form? or does he simply yield to the exigencies of rhyme? The two Apostles were, it must be remembered, the patron Saints of Rome.

² The fair image is that of the eagle of C. xviii. 107.

And each a ruby seemed, in which did meet
 A ray of sunshine, burning with such glow 5
 That in mine eyes there shone reflected heat.
 And that which now behoves that men should know,
 No voice e'er uttered and no ink e'er wrote,
 Nor e'er did phantasy such wonder show ;
 I saw, yea, heard, the bird's beak speak in note 10
 That sounded, as it spake, of *I* and *Mine*,
 While *We* and *Our* were meant in inner thought.
 And it began : " Here I in glory shine,
 Raised high, as just and holy in my ways,—
 Glory, beyond the soul's desire, divine ; 15
 And I on earth have record left of praise,
 So gained that e'en the evil troop of foes
 Commends, though from the example still it strays."
 As the same heat in many embers glows,
 So there, though many loves those souls did hold, 20
 One only utterance from that form arose.
 Then I began : " O flowers that wax not old,
 Of joy eternal, who in very deed
 Blend into one all odours manifold,
 By your words let me from that fast be freed 25
 Which long hath held me with its hungry pain,
 Finding on earth no food that met my need.
 Well know I, if in Heaven God's righteous reign
 Another realm makes mirror of its own,
 Your's sees, without a veil, all clear and plain. 30

⁴ Dante, like the seer of the Apocalypse (*Rev.* iv. 3, xxi. 19-21), has a special fondness for images from jewels (*C.* xv. 85, xxx. 66-76; *Purg.* vii. 75, xxix. 125).

⁵ An echo at once of *1 Cor.* ii. 9 and *John* xxi. 25.

¹² The eagle form was made up of many souls, and therefore its thoughts, though uttered in the singular, were the thoughts of many.

¹⁵ The words admit of two constructions: (1) "which does not let itself be surpassed by desire;" (2) "which does not let itself be won at man's wish." I prefer the latter, as echoing *Matt.* vii. 21; *2 Tim.* ii. 5.

¹⁶ The memory is that of the many wise and just rulers of Rome enumerated in *Mon.* ii. 4, 5. Their praise had become the commonplace of rhetoric, but few followed their example.

²³ The voices of the souls are as the odours of the flowers. There may be a reminiscence of *Purg.* vii. 80, or *Song of Sol.* i. 3.

³⁰ If elsewhere in Heaven the Divine justice finds a mirror, how much more in Jupiter. There is a singularly interesting touch of autobiography in the confession that the doubt which the poet is about to utter was one of long standing.

How eager I to hear to you is known,
 Is known the form and fashion of the doubt
 Through which my soul so long hath fasting gone."
 As falcon from his hood just issuing out,
 Moving his head and fluttering either wing, 35
 In eager will and beauty flits about,
 So I saw that sign act whose fashioning
 Was framed of many praises of God's grace,
 In songs which joy on high best knows to sing.
 Then it began: "He who the extent of space 40
 Marked with His compass, and within the bound
 Set secret things and open face to face,
 Could not His power so print on all around,
 Through the whole world, as that the Word Eterne 45
 Should not in infinite excess abound.
 And this from that first proud one we may learn,
 Who was the sum of all created good,
 And fell half-ripe, not waiting light to earn.
 And thus it seems all life of lower mood
 Is but a vessel all too small to hold 50
 The good, self-measured, in Infinitude.
 Whence this our vision, wherein we behold,
 Perforce, a ray of that Supreme Mind
 Which all things in its fulness doth enfold,
 Cannot of its own nature such power find 55
 But that it sees its origin confest,
 Leave all that is apparent far behind.
 Wherefore into the Justice ever blest
 The vision which your world receives, no more
 Can enter than the eye in ocean's breast, 60
 Which, though it see the bottom near the shore,
 Far out at sea beholds not; yet 'tis there,
 But the deep waters hide it evermore.

³⁴ Once more a falcon simile. See note on C. xviii. 45.

⁴⁰ An echo of *Job* xxxviii. 4; *Prov.* viii. 27; reproduced by Milton, *P. L.* vii. 224.

⁴⁶ Comp. the account of the fall of Lucifer in *H.* xxxiv. 18; *Purg.* xii. 26. Impatience mingled with his pride. He would not wait for glory, but clutched at it prematurely. Comp. *Phil.* ii. 6, *R. V.*

⁵⁵ The finite mind must, in the nature of the case, be incapable of measuring the Infinite. On the shore, where the water is shallow, we see the bottom, but God's judgments are as the "great deep" (*Ps.* xxxv. 6), and there we see not His righteousness, though we believe that it is there.

Light there is none, unless from out the clear
 And cloudless fount, nay, 'tis but darkness all, 65
 Mist from the flesh, or bane that brings death near.
 So now more open to thee is the pall
 That kept the living Justice from thy view,
 For which so often questioning thou didst call:
 For thou didst say, 'A man his first breath drew 70
 On Indus' banks, and there were none to tell
 Of Christ, or write or read the doctrine true;
 And he in every wish and deed lives well,
 As far as human reason may descry,
 And sinless doth in life and speech excel. 75
 He without baptism, without faith, doth die;
 Where is the justice then that damns for it?
 Where is his guilt if he the faith deny?'
 Nay, who art thou who on the bench dost sit
 To judge, with thy short vision of a span, 80
 The thousand miles that stretch indefinite?
 For one who thus to subtilise began
 With me, if Scripture were not o'er you set,
 A wondrous range of doubt were given the man.
 O earthly souls, O minds so carnal yet! 85
 That primal Will which is the Good Supreme
 Ne'er from Itself endured or change or let.
 What with It doth accord we just may deem:
 No good created draws It down, but still,
 As causing that, It pours its radiant beam." 90
 As round her nest the stork doth whirl at will,
 When she hath fed her young, and as the gaze
 Of nestling that of food hath had its fill,

⁶⁴ Man has no light except from God, and the natural darkness of the mind comes either from the necessary limitations of man's fleshly life or from the poison of sensuality. *En.* vi. 733; *Wisd.* ix. 15; *Matt.* vi. 22, 23; *James* i. 17, and *Rev.* xxi. 23 may have been in Dante's thoughts.

⁷⁰ The long-standing doubt is that which even the theologians of Rome (*Spirits in Prison*, pp. 160-187) have solved in the direction of the "wider hope." How can the justice of God be reconciled with the condemnation of the heathen who have sought righteousness, and yet have lived and died without baptism and in ignorance of the faith? Dante has no other solution than that of man's incapacity to measure the Divine justice (*comp. C. xiii. 130-142*). It would be a miracle if Scripture presented no such problems. Man must believe that God is good and righteous in all His ways. If Dante does not go beyond this, we must remember that he at least placed the righteous heathen in a state in which there was only the pain of unsatisfied desire (*H. iii., iv.*) This passage shows that even that conclusion troubled him with doubts. It is significant that his yearning after a wider hope grows stronger with his deepening faith towards the close of life. *Comp. 1 Tim.* i. 15, ii. 4; *Tit.* iii. 4.

⁹¹ The eagle form represents, it will be remembered, the wisdom of all who had been most

So acted, e'en as I mine eyes did raise,
 That blessed image, moving either wing, 95
 By many thoughts impelled in wondrous ways.
 And, so revolving, it ceased not to sing :
 "As these notes are to thee, thus dull of ear,
 So ways eterne to man's imagining."
 Then resting, those bright lights that vessels were 100
 Of God the Holy Spirit, formed again
 The sign which made the world great Rome revere,
 And recommenced : "None rose to this domain
 Save him alone who did believe in Christ,
 Before or since He bore the cross and pain. 105
 But look how many cry 'O Christ, O Christ !'
 Who at the judgment shall much farther be
 From Him than some who have not known the Christ.
 Such Christians judged by Æthiops we shall see.
 Then, when the two bands take their separate way, 110
 One rich, one poor, for all eternity,
 What to your kings might not yon Persians say,
 When they shall see that volume open wide
 In which their vile deeds stand in full array ?
 Shall there be seen, 'mong Albert's deeds descried, 115
 That which ere long shall move the pen to write,
 For which shall lie waste Prague's dominion wide.
 Shall there be seen the trouble and despite
 The false coin-maker brings upon the Seine,
 Whom wild boar's tusk ere long to death shall smite. 120

conspicuous in their love of justice. The simile of the stork is one which might have met Dante's eyes in any city in Italy.

⁹⁵ The words spoken by the eagle seem clear enough ; what Dante did not understand was how the one voice could be the utterance of the many souls.

¹⁰⁰ One aspect of the Divine justice can at least be made prominent. The nominal worshippers of Christ (we note the triple rhyme again, as in C. xii. 71-75, xiv. 104-108) shall be worse off than those who have not known Him (*Matt.* vii. 21 ; *Luke* xii. 47).

¹¹⁰ The Æthiop may be chosen (*Ps.* lxxviii. 31) with reference to the Eunuch of *Acts* viii. 27. Was there any special reason for choosing the Persians as representative types of the righteous ? Was Dante thinking of Cyrus, or of modern kings, of whom, as of Zenghis Khan, the monarch of Cathay, he may have heard through Marco Polo ?

¹¹⁵ The passage which follows, as a survey of contemporary politics, is parallel to *Purg.* vi. 76-151. The Emperor Albert of Hapsburg in 1304 invaded Bohemia and took Prague by storm. "The pen" is that which records man's guilt in the book of God's remembrance.

¹²⁰ The crimes of Philip the Fair against Boniface VIII. and the Templars had been named in *Purg.* xx. 85-93, xxxii. 156. Here he is charged with falsifying the coin of his realm (*Vill.* viii. 58). The last line is a prophecy *ex eventu* of the manner of Philip's death in 1314.

Shall there be seen the pride that thirsts for gain,
Which drives the Scot and Englishman so mad
That neither can within his bounds remain.
Seen shall be there the life, vile, soft, and bad,
Of him of Spain and of Bohemia's son, 125
Who virtue never sought and never had.
Seen shall be there the 'I' that stands for one
Good deed o' the Cripple of Jerusalem,
While 'M' shall mark what otherwise was done.
Seen shall be there the baseness and the greed 130
Of him who tamely keeps the fiery isle,
Where from long toil was old Anchises freed :
And to show well how mean he is and vile,
The writing shall in letters maimed be shown,
Which, noting much, are read in little while. 135
And there to each the foul deeds shall be known
Of uncle and of brother, who on race
So noble and two crowns such shame have thrown.

¹³¹ The interest taken in a matter so remote from Italian politics as the wars of Edward I. and II. with Scotland lends some colour to the tradition that Dante had visited England. (Comp. vol. i. pp. 63, xliii.) He apparently condemns both sides as equally encroaching. As Edward I. is praised in *Purg.* vii. 132, it is probable that he refers to Edward II. and Bannockburn (1314). The Anglo-Scotch wars receive constant notice from Villani (ix. 138, 161, 180). A document is extant (Maitland Club, *Wallace Papers*, p. xix., edited by Rev. J. Stevenson, who found it among the Records of the Tower of London), in which Philip the Fair commands Wallace (William le Walois) to the French envoys at the Court of Rome, and urges them to persuade the Pope (Boniface VIII.) to enter into his views. The letter is dated in November 1300. If it was acted on, Wallace was in all probability at Rome in the early months of the year of Jubilee, and he and Dante may have met there. Three Scotch ecclesiastics came to Rome in that year and obtained a Bull which stopped Edward I. as he was on the threshold of a new invasion. See also Lowe's *Edin. Mag.*, i. pp. 208-209.

¹³² The king of Spain is probably Ferdinand IV., king of Castile (1295-1312), who took Gibraltar from the Moors, and unjustly put to death the brothers of the house of Carvajal, one of whom, after the manner of the Grand Master of the Templars, who addressed a like summons to Philip the Fair as he marched to execution, cited the King to appear before the judgment-seat of God within thirty days. Before the end of that period the King died. Alphonso X. (the Wise, 1252-84), who, like Celestine V., was guilty of a *gran rifiuto* in declining the Empire, and his son Sancho, have had their advocates among commentators. The king of Bohemia is Wenceslaus IV. Comp. *Purg.* vii. 101.

¹³³ The cripple is Charles II. of Naples, living in 1300, and succeeded by his third son, Robert, in 1309 (comp. C. viii. 146), the house of Anjou taking the title of king of Jerusalem, which went with the crown of the two Sicilies. In C. viii. 82 he is praised for his liberality, in which, it would seem, Dante saw his only virtue. The M stands, of course, for 1000. In *Conv.* iv. 6 Dante addresses Charles in terms of strong rebuke. Comp. *Purg.* xx. 79.

¹³⁴ The island of fire is Sicily. He who guards it is Frederick II., king of Sicily, the degenerate son of Peter of Aragon (*Purg.* vii. 119). In *V. E.* i. 12 avarice is noted as his besetting sin, and he is contrasted (though other writers speak of him as a man of letters, knowing his Bible and Virgil by heart) with the Emperor Frederick II. and Manfred. At one time, if we may trust the Ilarian letter, Dante intended to dedicate the *Paradise* to him. Comp. vol. i. p. lxxxix.

¹³⁵ *Æn.* iii. 707 places the death of Anchises, the father of Æneas, at Drepanum (*Trapani*).

¹³⁶ The thought seems to be that the faults of Frederick were so many that it would be necessary to use abbreviations, such as were common in mediæval MSS., to record them all. That was all that he deserved.

¹³⁷ The uncle is James, king of the Balearic Isles, son of James I. of Aragon. He is

And Norway's king and Portugal's their space
 Shall fill, and he Ragusa owns as king, 140
 Who on the coin of Venice brought disgrace.
 O blessed Hungary, if to her men bring
 No further mischief; and O blest Navarre,
 Were she well armed with that her mountain ring!
 And as an earnest of my truth there are 145
 Nicosia, Famagosta, to attest,
 Whose cry of grief and anger sounds afar,
 Through that vile beast who follows with the rest.

reproached with cowardice in having allowed Majorca to be taken from him by his brother. The brother of Frederick is James II. of Aragon, who, on the death of Peter, took that kingdom, leaving Sicily to his brother Alphonso. The latter died without issue in 1291 (*Purg.* vii. 115), and James seized on his dominions, against the claims of his younger brother, Frederick, and so reduced Sicily to the position of a province.

¹³⁹ The king of Portugal is Dionysius Agricola (1279-1325), whom national historians praise for his encouragement of commerce. To Dante it seemed, probably, that he sought only for material wealth, and abandoned the task of clearing the Peninsula from the Moors (*Phil.*)

The absolute ignorance of all the early commentators as to "the Norwegian" is the best illustration of the wide range of Dante's historical knowledge. Later critics vary in their conjectures: (1) Magnus Logöbatters (1263-80), said to have been conspicuous for a "peace at any price" policy, inconsistent with the ideal heroism of a true king; (2) Eric (1280-1300); (3) Hakon the Longlegged (1300-19). The two last were brothers, and were engaged in constant wars with Denmark. I incline to (2) or (3), as coming more within the horizon of Dante's outlook.

¹⁴⁰ Light is thrown on this allusion by a decree in the *Liber Aureus* of Venice (1282), ordering an inquiry into the conduct of Stephen Uroscius I., king of Rascia, whose territory included Illyria and Dalmatia, in issuing coins of debased metal, bearing the stamp of the denari and ducats of Venice.

¹⁴² Andrew III., the last king of the line of St. Stephen, had reigned 1290-1301. He was succeeded by Charles Robert (or Umberto), the son of Charles Martel, Dante's friend (*Par.* viii. 55), who had been himself crowned as king of Hungary in Naples in Andrew's lifetime (1295), claiming the succession through his mother, as daughter of Stephen V., but had never been in actual possession of the kingdom. Unless the words are ironical, Dante looked on him as inheriting his father's virtues (*C.* viii. 49-84). He is described as one "of great worth and valour" (*Vill.* xii. 6).

¹⁴³ Navarre had passed by the marriage of Jeanne, daughter of Henry I. of Navarre, with Philip the Fair (1284) to the house of Valois, and on the death of the latter in 1314, her son, Louis Hutin, took the title of king of France and Navarre. Dante's antipathy to France shows itself in the thought that Navarre would have been happy had the Pyrenees been a real, as well as a geographical, barrier protecting it from France.

¹⁴⁶ Nicosia and Famagosta were the two chief cities of Cyprus, governed by Henry II. of the French dynasty of Lusignan. What had taken place there (we again note the extent of the range of Dante's political sympathies) was a sample of what might be expected from French domination in Navarre. Such a king Dante can only describe as a beast (possibly with reference to the lion on the Lusignan shield) consorting with his mates. The close connexion between Cyprus and Genoa, which appointed a Podestà for the government of the island, sufficiently explains how it came within Dante's horizon. After a war extending over some years, Famagosta fell into the actual occupation of the Genoese for about seventy years. There was also a considerable commerce carried on with Cyprus both by Pisa and Florence. The house of Bardi, in particular, were connected with negotiations for ransoming prisoners who had been taken by the Turks (*Rev. R. F. McCleod*). Their range of operations must have been sufficiently extensive. *Comp.* vol. i. p. xlv.

CANTO XX.

*The Eagle's Praises of Righteous Kings—William the Good—Rhipheus—
Trajan.*

WHEN he who doth o'er all the world shed light
 To sink beneath our hemisphere is seen,
 And day all round us slowly fades in night,
 The sky, till then lit only by his sheen,
 As in an instant is with lustre fraught, 5
 With many lights, in all one light serene.
 This aspect of the heavens I had in thought,
 When that great symbol of the world and those
 Who rule it, in that blest beak silence wrought ;
 For then those lights, whose living brightness rose 10
 To greater glory, strain of song began,
 Which, fading, gliding, far from memory flows.
 O gentle Love, who in thy smiles art drest,
 How ardent in those pipes didst thou then show,
 Which thoughts inspired that holiest were and best ! 15
 And when those jewels, bright with loving glow,
 Wherewith I saw ingemmed the sixth bright star,
 Had silenced of those angel chimes the flow,
 Methought I heard a murmuring stream afar,
 Which falleth, crystal clear, from stone to stone, 20
 Showing how full its mountain sources are.
 And as the cithern's music takes its tone
 Within its neck, or as, through open way,
 The wind through bagpipe's orifice is blown,
 So, far removed from waiting or delay, 25
 That murmur rose up in the eagle's throat,
 As though from hollow place 'twere made to play.

¹ The sun was thought of in mediæval astronomy as the source of light to the fixed stars as well as to the planets (*Couv.* ii. 14, iii. 12). As is the sun by day to the starry host at night, which also derives its light from him, so was the single voice from the beak of the eagle to the chorus that followed. That chorus the poet listened to with a rapture which could not reproduce it, and then the solo was resumed.

¹⁴ A v. l. gives "sparks" instead of "pipes;" but comp. C. xii. 8.

²² We note the similitude characteristic of the student of music, like that of the organ in C. xvii. 44; *Parg.* ix. 144.

There it took voice, and issued in a note
 That in its beak formed words articulate,
 Dear to my heart, whereon those words I wrote. 30
 "That part in me whose glance doth contemplate
 The sun, in mortal eagles," so it spake,
 "'Tis meet thou scan with look deliberate ;
 Since, of the fires whereof my form I make,
 Those in my head that sparkle in mine eye 35
 Of all their ranks the loftiest places take.
 He who as pupil shines, placed centrally,
 Was the sweet Psalmist of the Holy Spirit,
 Who bade the Ark from town to town pass by ;
 And now he knows of his own song the merit, 40
 So far as in it his own thought was shown,
 By the reward, as great, he doth inherit.
 Of five who circle round my brow, this one,
 Who to my beak hath ta'en his post most near,
 Consoled the widow weeping for her son ; 45
 Now doth he know full well the cost how dear
 Christ not to follow, through experience
 Of this sweet life, and of its contrast drear.
 He who stands next in that circumference
 Of which I speak, upon the upper line, 50
 Postponed his death by his true penitence ;
 Now doth he know that fixed decrees divine
 Change not, although when worthy prayer doth seek,
 They may to-morrow for to-day assign.
 The next, with good intentions all too weak, 55
 Bore evil fruit ; himself, me, and the laws,
 Through yielding to the Pope, he changed to Greek ;

³¹ In the eagle's eye the gazer is to see six of the most conspicuous examples of righteous rule. (1) David. Of the *v. ll. effetto* and *affetto* (l. 41), I adopt the former. From one point of view the merit of David's song belonged to the spirit who dictated it, not to him, but there was also a self-consecration to the work which sprung from his own choice, and that from the scholastic standpoint was meritorious. Was there a half-consciousness in the poet that the same merit might be claimed by him as a sharer in the Psalmist's gift of song ?

⁴³ Of the five who form the brow round the eyeball, we have Trajan. For the history of the widow, comp. *Purg.* x. 75.

⁴⁹ (2) Hezekiah. Comp. 2 *Kings* xx. ; *Isai.* xxxviii. 'Each example teaches its own lesson. In this instance it is seen that prayer prevails to delay, but not to avert, the righteous punishment of sins. So Aquin. *Summ.* ii. 2. 83, 2.

⁵⁵ (3) Constantine, not without a renewed lamentation over the traditional Donation (C. vi. 1 ; *H.* xix. 115 ; xxvii. 94).

⁵⁷ Constantine became a Greek by removing to Byzantium, and so leaving Rome in the

Now knows he how the harm, whereof the cause
 Was found in his good deed, works him no ill,
 Though on the world much hurt and harm it draws. 60
 Then he who on the sloping arc doth fill
 His place was William, whom that land laments
 Which mourns for Charles and Frederick living still ;
 Now doth he know how Heaven in love consents
 With righteous kings, and by the outward show 65
 Of his great brightness still clear proof presents.
 Who would believe in that blind world below
 That Trojan Rhipheus here would e'er be found
 Fifth of the holy lights in this our bow !
 Now enough knows he what the world around 70
 Cannot discern of God's great grace on high,
 Though e'en his glance scans not the deep profound."
 As is a lark that cleaves at will the sky,
 First singing loud, then silent in content,
 With that last sweetness that doth satisfy, 75
 So seemed to me the image there imprinted
 Of that eternal joy which as each will
 Desires it, stamps the fashion of its bent.

hands of the Popes. The lesson here is that God accepts the will for the deed, and does not punish a mistake in judgment, however disastrous its results.

⁶¹ (4) William II. of Sicily (*b.* 1153, *d.* 1189), surnamed the Good. Recorded facts of his history are few, but *Phil.* quotes some Latin verses from a popular poem which show the popular estimate of his character, and which may have come to Dante's knowledge—

*"Rex Gulielmus abiit, non obiit,
 Rex ille, magnificus, pacificus,
 Cujus vita placuit Deo et hominibus,
 Ejus semper spiritus Deo vivat callitus."*

The epitaph on his tomb was at first simply

"Hic situs est bonus rex Gulielmus,"

but this was afterwards replaced by a more elaborate inscription.

⁶² Charles is the Cripple of Jerusalem of C. xix. 127, *Purg.* xx. 79; Frederick II. the king of Sicily of C. xix. 131, *Purg.* vii. 119. Men groaned under their tyranny. They lamented the loss of William the Good (*Kingd.* i. 22).

⁶³ Rhipheus is placed in Paradise in accordance with *Æn.* ii. 426—

*"Cedit et Rhipheus, justissimus unus,
 Qui fuit in Teucris, et servantissimus æqui."*

It would seem as if Dante was scarcely satisfied even with his own answer to the question which he had himself formulated (C. xix. 70-114), and was determined to show that the gates of Heaven were open to some, at least, of the righteous heathen. Line 72 contains a distinct reference to C. xix. 61. There may be also, as Butler suggests, an allusion to the *Dis aliter visum* which follows the passage just quoted. Even Virgil had been unable to see behind the veil, and had therefore thought the ways of God unequal.

⁷² English readers may be reminded of the apparently unconscious parallel of Shelley's poem on the "Skylark."

⁷⁴ The souls of the righteous rest in the sweetness of contemplating the Divine righteousness, as the lark rests on the sweetness of its own song.

⁷⁵ The eagle, as the symbol of the Empire, is the symbol also of the eternal joy to the working out of which the Empire is, in its idea, subservient. Men are what they are in proportion as they desire that joy.

And, though I was to doubt that did me fill
 As glass to colour that encoated lies, 80
 It could not wait in silence, patient still,
 But from my mouth "What things are these?" did rise,
 Forced from me by the pressure of its weight;
 Whereat great joy, bright flashing, met mine eyes.
 And thereupon, with look yet more elate, 85
 That ever-blessed symbol made reply,
 That I might not in eager wondering wait,
 "I see that thou believest, in that I
 Have said these things, but 'how' thou dost not see,
 So that, although believed, they hidden lie. 90
 Thou dost as one who knows by name what he
 Beholds, and yet their inmost being's sense
 Fails to discern unless a guide there be.
Regnum coelorum suffereth violence
 From fervent love and ever-living hope, 95
 Which conquers e'en the will of Providence;
 Not as a man with man in power doth cope,
 But conquers, since It wills to be o'ercome,
 And conquered,—conquers by its love's wide scope.
 The first life and the fifth that have their home 100
 Within my brow amaze thee, in that they
 Adorn the regions where the angels roam;
 Not, as thou deem'st, they left their mortal clay
 Heathens, but Christians, strong in faith to see,
 Or the pierc'd feet, or else the pierc'd feet's day, 105

⁸⁰ The artist nature is seen in the allusion to the methods of the workers in stained glass, who, for their ruby, coated the glass with a film of the desired colour, the other colours being in "pot-metal," i.e., in the glass itself (*Butt.*) Compare *Petrarch*, *Canz.* iii. 4.

⁸¹ The question implies wonder, and the wonder is that Trajan or Rhipheus are in Paradise. Dante had believed the fact, but did not see the reason, as men call a thing by its right name without knowing its *quiddity*, i.e., in the language of the schools, cannot define it philosophically.

⁹⁴ In the words of *Matt.* xi. 12, *Luke* xvi. 16, Dante finds an opening for the wider hope. As in the case of the woman of Canaan, the Divine will was willing to be conquered by the will of man, and so became more than conqueror. A grace of congruity, though not of congruency (*Aquin. Summ.* i. 2, 114, 1) was granted even to some among the heathen. The Thirty-Nine Articles will have made English Churchmen familiar with the distinction (*Art.* 13).

¹⁰³ The solution of the problem is, however, made to rest on the special circumstances of the individual instances. Trajan was released from Hell and received the truth that saves, and so was in Paradise as a Christian. *Aquinas (Summ.* iii. *Suppl.* 71, 5) hovers between the two views, one of which looked on the existence of Trajan as a leading case which might be true of others ("*de omnibus talibus similiter dici oportet*"), while the other held that the punishment of Trajan was only suspended till the day of judgment. The latter view Dante emphatically rejects. Trajan had been placed in a position in which the prayers of Christians

Beheld far off; for one from Hell, where free
 Path to good-will is none, with flesh was clad,
 That so of lively hope reward might be;
 Of lively hope, which put forth prayer that had
 Power to obtain that God his soul would raise, 110
 So that his will might turn to good from bad.
 The glorious soul of whom I tell the praise,
 Returning to his flesh for briefest hour,
 Believed in Him who could direct his ways,
 And so, believing, glowed with fiery power 115
 Of love so true, that when he died once more,
 He was thought worthy of this blissful bower.
 The other, through the grace which still doth pour
 From fount so deep that no created eye
 Its primal wave hath ever dared explore, 120
 Turned all his love below to justice high,
 Wherefore from grace to grace God opened wide
 His vision to redemption drawing nigh;
 So in it he believed, nor could abide
 Thenceforth the foul stench of the pagan's creed, 125
 And so reproved the stubborn heathens' pride.
 And those three Maidens met his baptism's need,
 Those whom thou sawest at the right-hand wheel,
 A thousand years ere baptism was decreed.

for his soul availed as for the souls of Christians. The popularity of the story is shown by its being found in the *Golden Legend*, with this suggestive conclusion:—"By thys (*sc.* Gregory's intercession) as somme saye, the payne perpetuell due to Trajan as a miscreant (*i.e.*, unbeliever) was some dele taken away, but for all that he was not quyte for the prison of Helle; for the sowle may well be in Helle, and fele ther no payne, by the mercy of God."

116 The "second death" (*Ital.*) for the state of the souls is clearly used in a different sense from that which the words bear in *Rev.* ii. 11, xx. 6, and as Dante uses them in *H.* i. 117 and *Ep.* vi. 2, and stands for the death which followed a temporary return to earthly life.

118 We note the use of the same image as in *C.* xix. 61. There are unfathomable depths in the Divine compassion as well as in the Divine judgments.

121 As in the case of Statius, Dante assumes for Rhipheus—here also, perhaps, as a leading case—a special Divine revelation of the coming redemption. So Aquinas (*Summ.* ii. 2. 2, 7) admits that "*multis gentiliū facta fuit revelatio de Christo*," if not explicitly of the mode of redemption, yet of the truth that God would not leave mankind to perish unredeemed.

127 An implicit faith may thus be accepted where explicit faith is wanting; so faith, hope, and charity may be attained without baptism, and supply its place. From Dante's standpoint this did not involve any recognition of merit in man's natural righteousness beyond that of assenting to the first motions of the supernatural light. It was still the grace of God that worked from first to last—from grace to grace. So Aquinas (*Summ.* iii. 66. 11, 68. 2), and even Augustine (*De Bapt. c. Don.* iv. 22) admit that the lack of baptism may be supplied either by martyrdom, or by the wish for baptism when it cannot be had, or by the faith working by love which is not tied to visible ordinances.

O grace predestined, how thou dost conceal 120
 Thy secret root from every mortal eye
 That sees not what the First Cause doth reveal !
 And ye, O mortals, judge not hastily,
 For even we, who look on God's own face,
 The number of the elect not yet descry ; 125
 And in this lack we find sweet gift of grace,
 For all our good in this Good finds its goal,
 And what God wills, our will too doth embrace."
 So from that godlike image to my soul,
 To remedy my dim and feeble sight, 130
 Sweet medicine was given that made me whole.
 And as skilled hand to one who sings aright
 Adjusts the harmonious tremor of his string,
 So that the song acquires the more delight,
 Thus, while it spake, as memory back doth bring 135
 What met mine eyes, I saw those glories twain,
 With one accord, like two eyes opening,
 Their flamelets move in measure with the strain.

¹²⁰ The doctrine of predestination is recognised by Dante, as it was by Augustine and Aquinas (*Summ.* i. 23, 2, iii. 24, 1), but so that it does not clash with man's freedom and responsibility. Dante deals with it in the temper of *Art.* xvii. of the English Church, and of the Royal Declaration prefixed to the Articles. Men must be silent and adore, refrain from judging others, and from presuming on their own election. We know not—not even the souls of the blest know—the number of God's elect, nor who they are, and can only judge approximately by what we see of men's works and characters. The seeming tares may be really wheat—may be capable of development into wheat; the seeming wheat may degenerate into tares, or turn out to have been tares from the first. Such ignorance is better for us than knowledge, for the best discipline for our minds is that they should will what God wills in the belief that that will is absolutely righteous and loving. Dante's answer to man's questionings is like Ezekiel's (*Ezek.* xviii. 25). Comp. C. xlii. 130-142.

¹²⁹ We note Dante's acceptance of the limitations of man's knowledge as entirely in harmony with Butler's sermon on "The Ignorance of Man." To be reminded of those limits is the very medicine which he needs to calm the fever of doubt.

¹⁴³ The simile, like those of l. 22, C. xvii. 24, *Purg.* ix. 144, reminds us that music also was one of Dante's studies.

¹⁴⁶ Trajan and Rhipheus glow with brightness in the joy of thinking that they have been chosen as objects of the Divine Love—representative instances, as it were, of the power and will of that Love to pass beyond the normal limitations which it has imposed upon itself.

It is suggestive, comparing this Canto with *Inf.* iii. iv., that the wider hope becomes clearer as Dante reaches the conclusion of his poem and nears that of his life. One traces something of a like development in the teaching of St. Paul as we compare 1 and 2 *Tim.* with 1 and 2 *Thess.* I may perhaps be permitted, as having in this matter sat at the feet of Dante and other like-minded masters of Israel, to refer to what I have written in the *Spirits in Prison*, ch. vi. on the "Salvation of the Heathen."

CANTO XXI.

*The Seventh Heaven, of Saturn—The Star-Ladder of Contemplation—
St. Peter Damian.*

ALREADY were mine eyes fixed on the face
 Of my dear Lady, and with them my mind,
 Nor for aught else was found there any place;
 Yet she smiled not. "Nay, if I smile could find,"
 So she began, "thou would'st like Semele 5
 Become, when she to ashes was consigned;
 For this my beauty grows, as thou dost see,
 Brighter the higher we ascend the stair
 Of this great palace of Eternity;
 Were it not tempered, 'twould shine forth so fair 10
 That thy frail mortal strength before its beam,
 As branch before the levin-brand, would fare.
 Now have we risen to the seventh star's gleam,
 Whence, now beneath the burning Lion's breast,
 An influence blent with his doth downward stream. 15
 Now fix thy mind there where thine eyes do rest,
 And make them as a mirror to the sign
 Which in that mirror shall be manifest."
 He who should know what joy of heart was mine,
 My glad eyes feeding on those features fair, 20
 When my thoughts bore me on another line,
 Would know what full contentment was my share,
 Obedience yielding to my heavenly guide,
 Could he with equal scale the two compare.

¹ The new brightness of Beatrice's eyes implies another ascent. We are now in the sphere of Saturn, the abode of the spirits that have given themselves to the life of contemplation. The full joys of that life, symbolised by Beatrice's smile, would be more than mortal strength could bear. There must be a reticence in the very raptures of the mystic. To seek those joys now is to act like Semele, who rashly desired to see the glory of Jupiter, and perished in the blaze of his lightnings (*Met.* iii. 253-315). It is characteristic of Dante's classicalism, that this illustration occurs to him, and that of Moses in *Exod.* xxxiii. 20 does not.

² Without entering into details, we note that Dante describes the position of Saturn, as seen in the constellation Leo in the Easter-tide of 1300. There probably is a mystic meaning in the fact. Saturn, the cold planet (*Couv.* ii. 14) of the contemplative, is in Leo, the symbol of fiery heat and strength. Extremes meet in the experience of the mystic.

Within the crystal sphere which circles wide 25
 Around the world, and bears a monarch's name,
 Under whose rule lay dead all guilt and pride,
 Of golden hue, transmitting ray of flame,
 I saw a ladder, rising up so high
 That it my keenest vision overcame. 30
 And glories so o'erpowering met mine eye,
 Descending on the steps, I deemed each ray
 Was there diffused that shines in this our sky.
 And as, accordant to their wonted way,
 Rooks move, together clustered, to and fro, 35
 To warm their night-chilled plumes at break of day;
 Some, without turning, on their journey go,
 And some move, circling, to their starting-place,
 And some wheel round, yet only move in show;
 So it appeared to me that I could trace 40
 Like movements in the spark-cloud that came on,
 Resting at certain points with slackened pace.
 And nearest us its station keeping, one
 Became so bright, I said within my thought,
 " Well do I see the love to me thus shown ; 45
 But she who tells me how and when I ought
 To speak or hold my peace, stands still, and I,
 Against my will, do well to ask of nought."
 She, therefore, who my silence did descry
 In His clear vision to whom all lies bare, 50
 Said to me, " With thy hot desire comply."
 And I began : " No merit that I share
 Gives me a claim that thou should'st answer me ;
 But for her sake who bids me speak my prayer,

²⁷ For the golden age under Saturn, see *Met.* i. 89-112; *H.* xiv. 96; *Virg. Ecl.* iv. 6; *Georg.* ii. 538.

²⁸ The traditional exegesis of Dante's time saw in the ladder of *Gen.* xxviii. 12 the symbol of the mystic's life, prayers ascending, angels descending. Comp. *John* i. 51. With these higher associations in view, and the long *catena* of tradition as to the meaning of Jacob's vision, I can hardly follow *Butt.* in tracing the ladder to a vision of Romoaldo (note on C. xxii. 49), or in finding a "magnificent compliment" to the ladder of the Scaligeri.

³⁵ For other bird-similitudes see *H.* v. 40, 46, 82, *et al.*

⁴⁵ Dante had learnt, in the case of Cacciaguida, that increase of brightness meant increase of love, and thus implied the desire to hold converse. The soul that is thus indicated is that of St. Peter Damian.

⁴⁶ Beatrice, as the symbol of Divine Wisdom, guides him to a right judgment as to the time for silence and the time for speech.

O blessed life, whom 'tis not mine to see, 55
 Wrapt in thy joy, to me, I pray, make known
 The cause that to this nearness draweth thee ;
 And tell me why within this sphere alone
 Is hushed that hymn of Paradise so clear,
 Which through the rest rings out its dulcet tone." 60
 "Thou hast a mortal's eye, a mortal's ear,"
 It answered ; " therefore here is song no more,
 As Beatrice's smiles are seen not here.
 Thus far have I descended, passing o'er
 The holy stairway's steps to make thee blest 65
 With voice and mantling rays that round me pour ;
 Not that more love to quicker movement pressed,
 For full as much, and more, above doth glow,
 As my bright flame to thee makes manifest :
 But the high Charity, which bids us go 70
 To work the counsels which the world control,
 To each assigns his lot, as thou dost know."
 "Well do I see," said I, "O burning soul,
 How Love unfettered in this court on high
 Follows the Eternal Mind that planned the whole ; 7
 But that which seems to me a mystery
 Is why thou wast predestinate alone,
 To this thy task, of all thy company."
 Ere from my lips that same last word had flown,
 The light, about its centre whirling round, 80
 Went spinning on, as spins a mill's swift stone ;
 Then answer made the love that there was found :
 "A light divine on me is concentrate,
 Piercing through this wherein I now am wound,
 Whose virtue, with my sight associate, 85
 Lifts me so high above myself that I
 The Essence see whence it doth emanate.

⁶⁰ Here there are no hymns such as had been heard in the other spheres. They would have been too much for mortal ears, just as Beatrice's smile would have been too much for mortal eyes.

⁶⁷ The humility of the saints in glory is shown in the fact that the soul that speaks disclaims any higher measure of love than others share. He is but doing the appointed work assigned him. Dante, accepting that statement, still seeks to know why that work was assigned to him alone of all that company.

⁸⁰ The whirling of the soul is the expression of the rapturous joy with which it accepts its appointed task.

Hence comes the joy that me doth glorify,
 For as my vision grows more bright and clear,
 So shines the flame with brighter clarity : 90
 But that pure soul in heaven that knows no peer,
 The Seraph who on God most near doth gaze,
 To solve thy question never could come near :
 Since deep within the abyss the problem stays !
 Which thou dost ask, the abyss of God's decree, 95
 From glance of creature eye cut off always ;
 And when thou art returned, I say to thee,
 Tell this to men, that they may not presume
 To such a goal to move with footsteps free.
 Earth shrouds the soul, which here is bright, in gloom : 10
 Consider then how that may be below,
 Wherein he fails who holds Heaven's highest room."
 These words he uttered, then restrained me so,
 That I withdrew my question, and was fain
 Humbly to pray that I his name might know. 105
 "Twixt the two shores that Italy contain
 Rise rocks not distant from thy native town,
 So high that lower roars the thunder's strain ;
 They make a rounded ridge, as Catria known,
 'Neath which there stands a holy monastery, 110
 To highest worship consecrate alone."

91-96 The soul of the speaker has attained the beatific vision of the Supreme Essence, but even the most illumined Seraph would fail to unfold the mystery of the Divine will, which assigns to every man his work. Dante on his return to earth is to report this, that men may not "rush in where angels fear to tread." The whole tone indicates the same sense of the limitations of man's knowledge as we have seen in C. xiii. 139, xix. 99, xx. 130.

106 St. Peter Damian sketches the outlines of his life, which we may in some measure fill up from the *Acta Sanctorum* of the Bollandists and Milm. Z. C. lii. 371-445. Born at Ravenna in humble life, he began life as a swineherd. His brother, Damiano, Archdeacon of Ravenna, had been educated, and he took Damian as a surname, as a token of his gratitude, just as the Bishop of Caesarea called himself Eusebius Pamphili, the friend of Pamphilus. He became a teacher at Ravenna (where Dante was probably residing when he wrote this Canto), but at the age of thirty entered the monastery of Fonte Avellana, near Catria and Gubbio, in the Umbrian Apennines; became its Abbot; was honoured by successive Popes from Gregory VI. to Stephen X., the latter appointing him in 1058 as Cardinal Bishop of Ostia. In 1059 he was sent by Nicholas II. as legate to Milan, to assert the rights of the See of Peter over that of Ambrose. He wrote a treatise, appalling in its Juvenalian horrors, against the vices that prevailed among the monks and clergy, and was a strong supporter of Gregory VII. in enforcing the celibacy of the priesthood and restraining the prevailing simony. Later on he laid aside his dignity as Bishop and Cardinal, and retired to his monastery, leading an austere and contemplative life. If, according to a somewhat uncertain tradition, Dante himself passed some time at the Fonte Avellana monastery on leaving Verona in 1318 (vol. I. p. cx.), there were local associations there, as well as at Ravenna, explaining his reverence for the Saint. The inference drawn from this passage by Franciosi (*Scritt. Dant.* pp. 12-17), that Dante admired the character and policy of Gregory VII., seems to me at variance with the whole tenor of the poet's teaching in the *Monarchia* and elsewhere.

Thus the third time he turned his speech to me,
 And then continuing said, "There I of old
 So strong became in God's blest ministry,
 That, or in summer's heat or winter's cold, 115
 The juice of olives was my only fare,
 Content with contemplations manifold.
 Of old that cloister for these heavens did bear
 A fertile harvest, now so barren found,
 'Tis meet that soon its shame be all laid bare. 120
 There did my name as Peter Damian sound—
 Peter the Sinner was my bye-name, where
 Our Lady's convent stands on Adrian shore.
 But little mortal life was yet to spare,
 When to that hat they called me, yea, they drew, 125
 Which evermore from bad to worse doth wear.
 Cephas and he, the Spirit's vessel true
 And chosen, barefoot went and mortified,
 And ate what food chance hostel to them threw.
 Our modern shepherds need on either side 130
 An arm to lead them and strong back to bear,
 So weighty they!—and one their train to guide;
 And with their palfreys they their mantles share,
 And so two beasts go underneath one skin:
 O Patience, that, this seeing, canst forbear!" 135

¹²² The natural meaning of the words seems to be that in some monastery on "the Adrian shore," *sc.* at Ravenna, Peter had been known by his self-imposed epithet of the "Sinner," and that at Fonte Avellana, before or afterwards, he took the name of Damiano from his brother. A difficulty arose from the fact that there was another Peter (degli Onesti), a monk of Santa Maria in Porto fuori, founded in 1096, who also, following Damian's example, took the name of *Peccator*. Some writers have assumed that Dante confused the two; others have adopted the reading "*fu*" instead of "*fui*," as though the line was introduced to correct such a confusion in the minds of others. As a matter of fact, Damian called himself *Peccator* in letters written at Fonte Avellana. On the whole, it is probable that Dante's knowledge of local facts was greater than that of his critics, and that he knew that the two names were associated respectively with the two localities (*Scart.*) In the later years of his life, it may be added, Damian had been at Ravenna as Papal legate, bringing back its Archbishop to obedience to the See of Rome.

¹²⁴ Damian was made Cardinal 1058, *d.* 1072. The rebukes of clerical vices that follow are exactly in harmony with what Damian had said and written in his lifetime (*Milm. L. C.* iii. 445). Line 126 carries our thoughts to the Cardinals of Avignon as baser than those at Rome had been.

¹²⁵ The invective reads almost like a caricature, but it is mild as compared with Damian's own language, or even with that of St. Bernard (*Serm. in Cant.* 33). One seems to see the burly prelate riding on his horse or mule with the four attendants, the stately robes not laid aside even for riding, but falling over the horse's back.

And at this word I saw more flames begin
 To leap down step by step and whirl around,
 And as they whirled more beauty did they win;
 Then round that soul they came, and kept their ground,
 And raised a shout that rang so deep a knell, 140
 That for it no similitude is found,
 Nor could I, thunderstruck, its meaning tell.

CANTO XXII.

St. Benedict's Lamentations over his Order—Dante in Gemini—The backward Look from the Eighth Heaven of the Fixed Stars.

OPPRESSED with this amazement, to my Guide
 I turned me, like a little child who goes
 For refuge there where most he doth confide;
 And she, like mother who, to give repose,
 Turns quickly to her pale and breathless boy, 5
 With voice that's wont to soothe him and compose,
 Said, "Know'st thou not thou dost Heaven's bliss enjoy,
 And know'st thou not all Heaven is holiness,
 And this is wrought by zeal without alloy?
 How their song would have changed thee thou may'st guess, 10
 And how my smile, far better than before,
 Since e'en that cry thy sense did so oppress,
 In which, if thou had'st read its prayerful lore,
 Thou should'st e'en now the avenger's sentence know,
 Which thou shalt see ere yet thy life be o'er. 15

¹³⁶ Severe as the words were, it was the severity of love that spoke in them, and therefore the loving souls of the mystics welcome them and rejoice in them; but their utterance was not, as in other cases, a hymn of praise, but as the thunder of a threatened doom, all the more terrible because undefined.

² For other similitudes from the life of children see C. i. 100; *H.* xxiii. 37; *Purg.* xxx. 43. We note the new, the almost filial relation in which the poet stands to Beatrice in her new transfigured character.

¹⁵ The words, considered as a prophecy *ex eventu*, may be referred either to the death of Boniface VIII. or the Babylonian captivity at Avignon; possibly to some unfulfilled hopes, cherished when the Canto was written, of a yet further vengeance which should correct the vices of the priesthood. Comp. *Purg.* xx. 94-96. That vengeance would come in due season, when the time was ripe, as Divine acts always do come, though men count them precipitate or slack. We are reminded of the words which are found on the monument of Henry VII., now in the Campo Santo of Pisa, "*Quicquid facimus venit ex alto.*" I cannot help tracing Dante's mind in them (vol. i. p. cxxxii.)

The sword on high nor deals its stroke too slow
 Nor yet too swift, save only in his thought
 Who, or with wish or fear, expects the blow.
 But turn thee now, for then, before thee brought,
 Thou shalt see other spirits high in praise, 20
 If, as I bid, the vision thou hast sought."
 And as it pleased her, so I turned my gaze,
 And saw a hundred spherules that combined
 To gain fresh beauty with their mutual rays.
 I stood as one who keeps within his mind 25
 Desire's keen goad, nor doth to question care,
 Such dread of o'er-bold speech each thought doth bind ;
 And then the greatest, bright beyond compare,
 Of all those shining pearls to us drew nigh,
 Unto my will supreme content to bear. 30
 Then from within it came, "If thou, as I,
 Could'st see the love that here doth live and glow,
 Thy thoughts would then to fullest utterance fly ;
 But that thou, waiting, be not all too slow
 For the high goal, I too will make reply, 35
 E'en to the thought o'er which thou watchest so.
 That mountain on whose slope Cassino high
 Standeth, was peopled in the days of yore
 By men of evil life and drawn awry ;
 And I am he who there first tidings bore 40
 Of His great Name who to our earth did bring,
 The truth that doth exalt us more and more,
 And o'er me such great grace its light did fling,
 I drew the neighbouring towns from impious rite,
 Which led the world in error wandering. 45

²⁰ Elsewhere the blessed souls are compared to rubies (C. xix. 4, xxx. 66), topazes (C. xv. 85, xxx. 76). Pearls are perhaps chosen as symbolising the purity of the contemplative life.

²¹ The speaker is St. Benedict, who has read, as in C. xv. 55, the poet's thoughts in the mirror of the Divine omniscience.

²⁷ The monastery of Monte Cassino, founded by Benedict in 529, after he had led for some years a hermit's life at Subiaco, stands on the site of a temple of Apollo and Diana. Benedict had thrown down their statues and converted the people of the district to the worship of Christ. Here also it is legitimate to trace the influence of personal associations. Alberic, whose vision of the unseen world may have served, with other like works, to have suggested the plan of the *Commedia*, was trained in that monastery, and was said to have had the vision at the age of nine. If we accept the tradition that Dante went before his exile as an ambassador to Naples, Monte Cassino would be a natural halting-place (vol. i. p. lxiii.)

These other fires were men whose eager sight,
 Contemplative, was kindled with the glow
 Which brings all holy flowers and fruits to light.
 Here Romoald', here Macarius, thou may'st know ;
 Here too my brethren, who in cloistered shade 50
 With steady feet and steadfast heart did go."
 And I to him : "The love which thou hast made
 So clear in speaking, and the semblance kind
 I see and note in all your fires displayed,
 Have so enlarged the faith that fills my mind, 55
 As the sun doth the rose when, wide outspread,
 Its flowers the fulness of their beauty find :
 Wherefore I pray thee, Father," so I said,
 "Tell me if I such grace can e'er obtain
 As to see thee with form uncovered." 60
 Then he : "My brother, thou at last shalt gain
 Thy highest wish in that supremest sphere
 Where all desires, e'en mine, to rest are fain.
 Perfect, mature, at last complete is there
 Each yearning of the heart ; in that alone 65
 All parts are ever as at first they were.
 For not in space it stands, and pole hath none,
 And this our stairway riseth to its height,
 And so beyond thy vision stretches on.
 The loftiest summit met of old the sight 70
 Of patriarch Jacob, soaring to the skies,
 What time he saw the angels on it light.

⁴⁹ Of the three conspicuous bearers of the name Macarius, Dante probably refers to the disciple of St. Antony known as "the Egyptian" or "the Great," who for sixty years lived as a hermit in the desert of Scetis (*d.* 391), and was honoured as one of the great masters of the contemplative life. Possibly he did not distinguish him from the other Macarius, also a disciple of St. Antony, who gathered round him a company of 5000 monks. Romoaldo, born in Ravenna in 956, founded in 1018 the monastery of Camaldoli in the Casentino, mentioned in *Purg.* v. 96. Here also it is allowable to trace the influence of local associations. It is noticeable also, as connected with the "ladder" of C. xxi. 9, that it is recorded of him in the annals of Camaldoli that he had seen a vision like that of Jacob (*Gen.* xxviii. 12), in which men clothed in white were seen ascending the ladder whose top reached to Heaven (*Butler*).

⁵⁶ The same image is found in *Conv.* iv. 27, with the notable difference that there it represents the youth and maturity of the student of philosophy, here the expansion of the soul under the influence of contact with holiness and love.

⁵⁹ Dante knows Benedict as a master of the spiritual life. Shall he ever know him more fully as a man, see his human face, know the thoughts of his heart? Who that reads of the lives of saints has not felt something of a like yearning?

⁶² The "remotest sphere" is the Empyrean, the dwelling-place of God and His angels, the permanent home of the souls, who manifest themselves in the lower spheres according to their several characters (*Conv.* ii. 4; C. xxxi.-xxxiii.), that is beyond space, and is perfect in its perpetual rest (C. iv. 28-30).

⁷⁰ The vision of the ladder is definitely explained. See C. xxi. 9.

But to ascend it now no foot doth rise
 From off the earth, and that great Rule of mine
 But lives to waste the paper where it lies. 75
 The walls which once were as an abbey's shrine
 Are made as dens of robbers, and the hoods
 Are sacks filled full with flour of thoughts malign.
 But even usury not so far intrudes
 Against God's pleasure as those fruits unjust 80
 Which fill the monks' hearts with such wanton moods.
 For what the Church doth hold, she holds in trust
 For those who in God's name ask charity,
 Nor for a kinsman, or some baser lust.
 So soft and frail our fleshly natures be, 85
 That a good start holds not on earth its own
 From the oak's birth till acorns fill the tree.
 Silver and gold, we know, had Peter none,
 And I began with fasting and with prayer,
 And meekly Francis all his Convent won. 90
 And if of each beginning thou art 'ware,
 And then of each the downward pathway track,
 Thou'lt see that white has passed to brown in wear.
 But Jordan, when of old 'twas driven back,
 And the sea fled at bidding of God's will, 95
 Were greater marvel than to meet this lack."
 So speaking, turned he to his company,
 Whereat that company together drew ;
 Then like a whirlwind soared once more on high.

⁷⁵ St. Peter Damian's lamentation over the vices of prelates has its counterpart in that of Benedict over the degeneracy of his Order. His Rule has become, in the most literal sense of the words, waste paper. Benvenuto relates that Boccaccio paid a visit to Monte Cassino in search of some precious MSS., and found the library door left open, the grass growing on the threshold and in the windows, and many of the books mutilated to make psalteries for the choir-boys.

⁷⁶ An obvious echo of *Jer.* vii. 11; *Matt.* xxi. 13. The sacks full of mouldy flour are the heads of the monks, full only of evil and corrupt desires.

⁸⁰ Usury, it will be remembered, had been classed (*H.* xi. 50) as a sin against nature. And even worse than that was the corrupt use of ecclesiastical revenues (*C.* xii. 98), or nepotism, or worse than nepotism. Line 84 clearly refers to the sin which Dante had coupled with usury (*H.* xi. 50). Dante carries on the work of Damian.

⁸⁵ The three great instances of the corruption of the succession, (1) of St. Peter, (2) of Benedict, (3) of Francis of Assisi, form a melancholy basis for induction.

⁸⁶ The mystical interpretation of the words of the *In exitu Israel* (*Purg.* ii. 46) is still in Dante's thoughts. The restoration of a corrupt Church or Order to primitive vigour is as great a miracle as the marvels spoken of in *Ps.* cxiv.

With just one nod, my Lady, sweet and true, 100
 Urged me behind them up that self-same stair,
 So much her might my nature did subdue.
 Nor e'er, when bodies rise or fall in air,
 Was motion natural so exceeding fast
 That with my winged flight it could compare. 105
 So, Reader, to that triumph high at last
 May I return, for which, with many a tear,
 I smite my breast and mourn my sinful past !
 Not for so short a moment could'st thou bear
 Thy finger in the fire as that in which 110
 I saw the sign next Taurus, and was there.
 O glorious stars, O light supremely rich
 In every virtue, which I recognise
 As source of all my powers, whate'er their pitch,
 With you he had his birth, with you did rise, 115
 He, the great father of each mortal race,
 When first I breathed the air of Tuscan skies ;
 And now when unto me was granted grace
 To enter that high sphere wherein ye roll,
 'Twas given to me with you to take my place. 120
 To you devoutly now I lift my soul,
 With fervent sigh, that it fresh power may gain
 For the hard task that draws it to its goal.
 "Thou art so near to where thou shalt attain
 Supreme salvation," Beatrice said, 125
 "That with clear eyes thou should'st see all things plain ;

¹⁰⁰ The ladder is, it will be remembered, that of heavenly contemplation. On that ladder Dante and Beatrice mount with inconceivable rapidity to the sphere of the fixed stars, the eighth of the Ptolemaic system.

¹¹¹ The sign that follows Taurus is Gemini, which the sun enters about May 18th or 20th. This fixes, probably, Dante's birthday as after that date. In the astrology of the Middle Ages the sign Gemini is in the house of Mercury, and is, therefore, the source, in the theory of stellar influences, of the gifts of genius and skill of speech (*H.* xv. 55 ; *Purg.* xxx. 109).

¹¹⁴ The line is probably a conscious reproduction from Cicero's *Orat. pro Archia* : "*Sic quid est in me ingenii, iudices, quod sentio quam sit exiguum.*"

¹¹⁶ The sun, as the great source of life, was in the sign of Gemini when Dante first drew breath. That sign is the fitting point for his entrance within the starry sphere.

¹²² The "*passo forte*" has been differently explained as meaning (1) the remainder of the poem, as dealing with the highest mysteries of heavenly things, (2) as the death which Dante, when he wrote the Canto, felt could not be far off. The invocation to the stars of Gemini, the givers of thought and speech, turns the scale in favour of (1). Comp. C. x. 26, 27.

¹²⁴ The "crowning salvation" is the beatific vision of the Empyrean, which lay beyond the sphere of the fixed stars (C. xxxiii. 27).

And therefore, ere thou farther in dost tread,
 Look down once more, and see the world, how wide
 Beneath thy feet it lieth, far outspread ;
 So that thy heart, with joy beatified, 130
 May join these hosts with triumph now elate,
 That here in this ethereal sphere abide.”
 Then I retraced my way through small and great
 Of those seven spheres, and then, this globe did seem
 Such that I smiled to see its low estate ; 135
 And that resolve as noblest I esteem
 Which holds it cheap ; whose heart is set elsewhere
 As truly just and good we well may deem.
 I saw the daughter of Latona there
 All glowing bright, without that shadowy veil, 140
 Which once I deemed was caused by dense and rare ;
 I saw, with open glance that did not fail,
 The glories, Hyperion, of thy son,
 And Maia and Dione how they sail
 Around and near him, and Jove's temperate zone 145
 Twixt sire and son, and then to me were clear
 Their varying phases as they circle on ;
 And all the seven did then to me appear
 In their true size and true velocity,
 Each moving as distinct and separate sphere. 150

¹³⁷ Dante, as in C. ix. 73, 81, coins one of the pronominal verbs, which English can but paraphrase.

¹³⁸ By an act of scientific imagination the student of astronomy pictures to himself what the earth, as the centre of the universe, would look like as seen from the highest of the eight spheres. Dante's astronomical distances were probably not so vast as those of modern science, but even thus he learnt the littleness of earthly things. A *replica* of the same thought appears in C. xxvii. 79-87.

¹³⁹ See C. ii. 46-148 for the speculations referred to. We may note, in passing, Dante's knowledge that the moon, though revolving, or rather because it revolves, upon its axis, always shows the same hemisphere to us. From the stars he sees the other hemisphere which we never see, and there are no spots in it. Comp. the discussion in C. ii.

¹⁴⁰ Hyperion, son of Uranus and Terra, appears in *Met.* iv. 102, 241, as the father of the Sun ; Maia, one of the Pleiades, as the mother of Mercury in *Met.* i. 669, ii. 685 ; Dione as the mother of Venus (C. viii. 7). The two planets are thought of as moving between the Earth and the Sun. Jupiter moves, in his turn, between his son Mars and his father Saturn.

¹⁴¹ The marvellous vision has scarcely a parallel in poetry. Planetary distances and movements are seen from an immeasurable distance as objects of direct vision. The nearest approach to a parallel is found in Dante's favourite, Boethius (ii. 7), and Cic. *Somm. Scip.* c. 3, 4. Milton (*P. L.* vii. 339-386, viii. 66-178) attempts a like survey as from the standpoint of the Copernican system. Compared with that survey, the earth, on which men fight for fame, wealth, power, was but as a threshing-floor. Chaucer, *Troil. and Cress.* v. 1826, presents also some points of resemblance. Probably he had Dante in his thoughts.

The little plot that stirs our enmity,
 As with the eternal Twins I turned me round,
 Lay all before me, from the hills to sea : 153
 Then mine eyes looked where brightest eyes were found.

CANTO XXIII.

*The Stars of the Triumph of Christ—The Rose and the Lilies—The Hymn
 "Regina Celi."*

As bird, within the leafy home it loves,
 Upon the nest its sweet young fledglings share,
 Resting, while night hides all that lives and moves,
 Who, to behold the objects of her care,
 And find the food that may their hunger stay,— 5
 Task in which all hard-labours grateful are,—
 Prevents the dawn, and, on an open spray,
 With keen desire awaits the sun's bright rays,
 And wistful look till gleams the new-born day ;
 So did my Lady then, with fixed gaze, 10
 Stand upright, looking on that zone of Heaven
 Wherein the sun its tardiest course displays ;
 And when I saw her thus to rapt thought given,
 I was as one who, in his fond desire,
 Rests in firm hope, although by strong wish driven. 15
 'Twixt this and that 'when,' short time did expire—
 I mean my waiting and the vision bright
 Of Heaven, each moment flushed with clearer fire ;

¹⁵³ The description indicates that the poet saw the whole of the land hemisphere of the earth, that he was therefore in the meridian of Jerusalem, the centre, in mediæval geography, of that hemisphere, and that as the sun was in Gemini, also in that meridian, it was noon.

¹ The image of the bird—perhaps the most beautiful of all in Dante's bird-gallery—may have been drawn from nature. Interesting parallels are, however, found in Dante's favourite poets, Virgil (*Æn.* xii. 473-476) and Statius (*Achill.* i. 212).

¹⁰ The description is analogous to those of *Purg.* xxx. 58-75, but with this difference, that here, carrying on the thought of C. xxii. 133-154, the astronomical facts are seen not from the standpoint of earth, but from that of the sphere of the fixed stars. The problem was a difficult one, and Dante can scarcely be said to have solved it. What is meant is that Beatrice looks to that part of the heaven (but was the glance upward or downward?) which would be to the astronomer on earth in the meridian of Jerusalem as the centre of the land hemisphere. In that region, in the valley of Jehoshaphat (*Joel* iii. 2), according to the universal belief of the Middle Ages, the Christ was to appear at His second coming. And here accordingly there is a vision of that glory, and all the saints who had been manifested, according to their merits in the lower spheres, are here gathered together.

And Beatrice said, "Behold the might
 Of Christ's triumphant hosts; the harvest know, 20
 Reaped from the rolling of these spheres of light."
 Then seemed it as though all her face did glow,
 And her clear eyes so shone with joyous sheen,
 I must without a comment let them go.
 As when in full-moon nights, in sky serene, 25
 Smiles Trivia's face among those nymphs eterne,
 Whose shining forms through all heaven's vaults are seen,
 So I, above ten thousand lamps that burn,
 Saw one bright Sun that kindled every one,
 As our sun doth the orbs we see superne; 30
 And through the living light transparent shone
 The lucid substance so divinely clear,
 That my frail sight was dazzled and o'erdone.
 O Beatrice, gentle guide and dear!
 To me she said, "That which o'ertasks thy sense 35
 Is Might from which no refuge doth appear.
 There is the Wisdom, there the Omnipotence,
 That opened wide the paths 'twixt Heaven and earth,
 For which so long has been desire intense."
 As flash that from the storm-cloud takes its birth, 40
 Dilating, finds not space wherein to stay,
 And, 'gainst its nature, doth itself inearth,
 So, as before my mind those rich feasts lay,
 Itself, grown large, beyond itself it bore,
 And how it fared my memory fails to say. 45

²⁰ Trivia = Diana = the Moon, as in *Æn.* vi. 13, 35. The comparison will remind most readers of the well-known passage in Homer (*Il.* viii. 555); but I can scarcely agree with Butler that that passage must have been known to Dante in the original.

²⁵ The Sun is none other than the Christ—the true Light, Light of Light, the Dayspring from on high, the Sun of Righteousness. The "substance" through which the Light shines is the glorified human nature of the ascended Christ (C. xiv. 52).

³⁰ The fixed stars were supposed in mediæval astronomy to shine by the sun's reflected light. *Butl.* takes the words as = "the eyes we upward turn" (Comp. C. xxxii. 99; *Purg.*, xviii. 3).

³⁵ As with the great masters of theology, the mystery of the Incarnation was for Dante the loftiest and profoundest of all truths. By it, as by the ladder of Jacob's vision (C. xii. 9, xxii. 70), the way had been opened between earth and Heaven.

⁴⁰ The law of fire was, from the standpoint of Dante's physics (*Conv.* iii. 4), to ascend, yet the lightning falls to the earth. So the soul of the seer, expanding with its heavenly food, contrary to the law which unites it with the body, passes, as in ecstasy, into a higher region (comp. 2 *Cor.* xii. 2-4), and it was impossible to recall or reproduce what he had then seen and felt (C. i. 121-141).

"Open thine eyes and what I am explore,
 Thou hast seen things that give thee strength to bear
 Light of my smiles thou could'st not bear before."
 I was as one who feels as half aware
 Of some forgotten dream, and strives in vain 50
 To call it to his mind and keep it there,
 When I this offer heard thus spoken plain,
 Of such thanks worthy that no time should blot
 It from the book where lives the past again.
 Though now should chant in concert every throat 55
 That Polyhymnia and her sisters made
 So passing rich with sweetest milk of thought,
 To help me, not a thousandth part were said,
 Were they to sing that holy smile divine,
 And light which o'er her holy face it shed. 60
 So, when to tell of Paradise is mine,
 Here needs must leap the consecrated song,
 As one whose way some hindrance doth confine;
 And whoso thinks how great the theme and long,
 How frail the shoulder that the weight must bear, 65
 Will hardly, though it tremble, count it wrong.
 No sea-way for a little bark is there,
 Where prow o'er-daring cleaves the surging sea,
 Nor for a pilot who himself would spare.

⁴⁸ In C. xxi. 4 Beatrice had told the seer that her smile—symbol of the rapture of Divine joy—would utterly consume him, but the vision of glory which he had just seen has strengthened him so that he can bear it now.

⁵⁰ One notes the self-portraiture of the man, who, from earliest youth onward, had seen visions and dreamt dreams (*V. N. c. 3, 9, 12, et al.*) Sometimes these could be recalled, sometimes, as in the case of Coleridge's *Kubla Khan*, the endeavour to recall was all but fruitless.

⁵³ We note the parallel with the opening words of the *V. N.*: "In that part of the book of my memory."

⁵⁵ *Æn.* vi. 625, *Met.* viii. 533, possibly *John* xxi. 25, and Homer, *Il.* ii. 637, may have been in Dante's thoughts.

⁵⁷ The image was a favourite one (*Purg.* xxii. 102), and was, in part, an echo of 1 *Cor.* iii. 2, *Heb.* v. 12, 1 *Pet.* ii. 2.

⁶⁰ It remains true, *ipso facto*, that the ineffable cannot be told. The task was too great for mortal man to venture on.

⁶⁷ The thought of C. ii. 1-9 is reproduced. The *v. ll.* give *palleggio*, which may = *pelago* = sea, and *paraggio* or *paregio* = harbour or roadstead. The sense is, of course, much the same. The latter word still forms part of the nautical vocabulary of the Adriatic, and was one with which Dante would be familiar among the sailors at Venice, Pisa, or Genoa. Other readings, each varying the vowel with modifications of meaning, need not be noticed.

⁶⁹ There is a touch of pathos in the poet's reference to his own unsparing labours. Comp. C. xxv. 3.

"Why doth my face now so enamour thee, 70
 That thou dost not to yonder garden turn,
 Which 'neath the rays of Christ blooms fair to see?
 There is the Rose wherein the Word Eterne
 Was clothed in flesh, and there the lilies grow
 Through whose sweet scent the way of life we learn." 75
 Thus Beatrice; and I, prompt to go
 Where she did guide, gave myself yet again
 To strife wherein frail eyes their weakness know.
 As oft mine eyes have looked on flowery plain,
 Themselves o'ershadowed, whilst clear sunlight beamed 80
 Through rift in cloud-banks, brighter after rain,
 So saw I then more shining ones that gleamed,
 With burning rays illumined from above,
 Yet saw no source from whence the brightness streamed.
 O Might that thus hast stamped them in Thy love, 85
 Thou didst ascend on high, thus giving space
 To these mine eyes, that else too weak would prove!
 The name of that fair Flower, whose bounteous grace
 At morn and eve I ask, my soul impelled
 To see that greater glory face to face. 90
 And when, portrayed in them, mine eyes beheld
 The size, the beauty of the living star,
 Which there excels as it on earth excelled,
 A little flame athwart the heaven from far,
 Formed like a band wherewith the brow is crowned, 95
 Engirdled it in windings circular.

⁷⁰ The implied thought is that the contemplation of the highest human beauty, even of the highest human wisdom, is but a small matter as compared with that which has for its object the glory of Christ and His Church. The "garden" is, of course, Paradise; the Rose—the *Rosa mystica* of the Litany of the *Rom. Brev.*—is the Virgin; the fragrant lilies are the saints. The words are as a mystical exposition of the *Song of Solomon*, ii. 1, 16, after the manner of mediæval interpreters. That passage, we may note, forms in the *Rom. Brev.* a lesson for July 2d, the Festival of the Visitation of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

⁷⁵ The beatific vision, however, comes not yet. The personal glory of the Christ is reserved for a further stage, and the eyes of the seer gaze upon that glory as manifested in the saints of God, as he had on earth looked on the fair flowers in a sunlit meadow, while he himself was shaded from its rays. Line 80 finds a parallel in 2 *Sam.* xxiii. 4.

⁸⁰ The *Ave Maria* was, as was natural with a devout Catholic, united with the *Paternoster* in Dante's morning and evening prayers. The Virgin is the "greater fire" of l. 90. Butler suggests ingeniously that the name of S. Maria del Fiore, as the title under which the Duomo of Florence was dedicated, may have been in the poet's thoughts.

⁹⁰ Another echo from the *Rom. Brev.* (*Scart.*), "*Ave maris Stella*" (*Hymn for the Feasts of the B. V. M.*). As she excelled all others in the graces of her life on earth, so she excels them in the glory of her life in Paradise.

⁹⁵ The "little flame" from the Empyrean Heaven is the Archangel Gabriel, who revolves around the Virgin. The sweetest melody of earth would be as harsh thunder-roar compared with the infinite sweetness of his song.

What melody soe'er doth sweetest sound
 On earth, and draws the soul in rapt desire,
 Would be like broken clouds that thunder round,
 Compared with that sweet music from the lyre 100
 That o'er that sapphire bright was then entwined,
 Which doth the heaven most lustrous ensapphire.
 "Angelic Love am I, and thus I wind
 For joy of Him whom once thy pure womb bore,
 Where He we yearn for did a hostel find ; 105
 And I will wind me, Lady, evermore,
 While thou thy Son shalt follow, and shalt make
 The highest sphere more heavenly than before."
 Thus did the ever-circling music take
 Its closing note, and every other light 110
 With name of MARY did the echoes wake.
 That robe which, as with regal glory dight,
 Wraps all the spheres of world that lives and glows,
 Filled with God's breath and all His ways of might,
 So high above us in its concave rose, 115
 That where I stood its order fair did hide
 Its beauty from us, nor did half disclose :
 Wherefore mine eyes no power to me supplied
 To track the course of that encrownèd crest,
 That rose and rested at her Son's dear side. 120
 And, as a babe that to its mother's breast,
 When it hath had its fill, doth stretch its hand,
 And inward love by outward glow attest,
 So each of those white gleams erect did stand,
 And with its summit so inclined, that I 125
 Their love for Mary well could understand.

101 Sapphire, as the symbol at once of purity and of the divine glory. See note on *Purg.* l. 13, and *Exod.* xxiv. 10. So in mediæval art the Virgin is commonly painted with a robe of sapphire-blue. The "broken cloud" imagery reminds us of l. 81.

108 The words paint the glory seen in the Heaven of stars, in itself but a prelude to that of the Empyrean Heaven from which Gabriel has descended.

112 The "regal mantle" is the sphere of the *Primum Mobile*, which encircles all the other spheres. I follow the readings "*avvra*" rather than "*salva*," and "*alito*" rather than "*abito*," "*interna*" rather than "*eterna*." Dante's gaze failed to follow what we may call the new "assumption" of the Virgin to the presence of her Son in the Empyrean Heaven.

121 Another of the child-pictures from Dante's gallery. Comp. *H.* xxiii. 38; *Purg.* xxx. 44, xxxi. 64.

So stayed they then and met my gazing eye,
 And sang *Regina Cœli* with a tone
 So sweet, its joy fades not from memory.
 Ah me! what plenteous harvests now they own, 130
 Those well-filled coffers, which of old were found
 Good tilth-land, sown with good seed, every one!
 True life, true treasures, now for them abound,
 Won when, as exiles sad, they wept of old,
 And left their gold on Babylonian ground. 135
 Here he victorious doth his triumph hold,
 'Neath God's exalted Son, of Mary born,
 With the two great assemblies, new and old,
 By whom the keys of that bright Heaven are borne.

CANTO XXIV.

St. Peter examines Dante as to Faith—Trinity in Unity.

"O HAPPY band, elect to fullest joy,
 At the blest Lamb's great supper duly placed,
 Who feeds you still with bliss that cannot cloy!"

¹²⁹ From the Antiphon at Compline in Easter-week, and so fitting in with the assumed date of Dante's vision—

*"Regina cœli, letare, alleluia,
 Quia quem meruisti portare, alleluia,
 Resurrexit, sicut dixit, alleluia."*

¹³⁰ The word *beolce* admits of being taken as = tillers of the soil—"sowers of the good seed, or = acres, i.e. "the soil so tilled." The latter seems to give the best meaning. The souls that Dante saw were not exclusively "sowers" in the sense of "preachers," but saints in the "good ground" of whose hearts the good seed had taken root and brought forth the fruit of good works.

¹³⁶ The contrast between Paradise and Babylon, as the symbol of the world, was familiar to mediæval thought. Comp. the Hymn *Alleluia, dulce Carmen* of the 13th century in Neale, J. M., *Mediæval Hymns*, p. 183—

*"Alleluias without ending
 Fit yon place of gladsome rest;
 Exiles we, by Babel's waters,
 Sit in bondage and distress'd."*

The former was to be gained only by ceasing to care for the gold which was the treasure of the latter. Looking to C. xxii. 88, there is a special fitness, even if we do not adopt the reading in l. 135, "where he left the gold," in the reference to St. Peter in l. 139.

¹³⁷ The two assemblies are those of the saints of the Old and New Covenants.

¹³⁸ Comp. *Rev.* xix. 9, vii. 16, as the starting-point of these lines. Probably the echoes of the hymn—

*"Ad regias agni dapes
 Stolis amicti candidis,"*

(*Brev. Rom. Sabb. in Alb. Vesp.*), may have been more immediately suggestive.

If by God's grace this man before doth taste
 Of that which falleth from your well-filled board, ⁵
 Ere death the limit of his life hath traced,
 To his immense desire your heed accord,
 And somewhat him bedew ; to you 'tis given
 To drink of that fount whence his thought hath poured."
 Thus Beatrice, and those souls in Heaven ¹⁰
 Became as spheres that move on fixed pole,
 Like comets bright that flashing on are driven ;
 And, as the wheels in ordered clock-work roll,
 So that the first we look at seems at rest,
 The last to fly, such skill hath framed the whole, ¹⁵
 So were the carols of those spirits blest,
 Whose movements, as I saw them, swift or slow,
 The variance of their riches did attest.
 From ~~that~~ wherein did fullest beauty show
 I saw emerge a flame so full of bliss ²⁰
 That none it left there with a brighter glow ;
 And moving thrice around my Beatrice,
 It wheeled with so divine a melody
 That fancy fails to tell me what it is.
 So my pen skips ; to write is not for me ; ²⁵
 For, not alone our speech, our highest thought,
 For such fine touch hath colours all too free.

⁵ The image is reproduced from *Conv.* i. 1, but there the feast is that of Philosophy, not the marriage-supper of the Lamb. The difference is eminently characteristic of the periods of Dante's life to which the two works respectively belong. See *Essay on The Genesis and Growth of the Commedia*.

⁹ Glorious as the vision was, it was, as in C. x. 23-25, but a foretaste of the good things to come, as the dew compared with the full draught from the fountain of the Water of Life.

¹² Noticeable as the only reference to comets in the *Commedia*. Probably it was suggested by the appearance of what Humboldt calls the "magnificent comet of 1843," with its "unexampled splendour." According to Sir John Herschel's calculation (*Outl. of Ast.* 208-372), that comet appeared in 1318, the very year in which Dante was working at the later Cantos of the *Paradiso* (Humboldt, *Cosm.* iv. pp. 541, 544). Another calculation of its period gives 530 years, and this would fix its appearance in 1313. For the appearance of numerous other comets between 1300 and 1321 (the date of Dante's death), see G. F. Chambers' *Descript. Astron.* pp. 397-404. Three comets appeared in 1315. Comp. also *Vill.* viii. 48, ix. 65 ; *Æn.* x. 272.

¹³ Comp. C. x. 139-148. It is suggestive that there the comparison is drawn from the outside mechanism, here from the inner works. Had Dante, after first observing, been examining the clock of the Archdeacon Pacificus at Verona, made in the 10th century, or was it a reminiscence of that which was fixed at Westminster in 1288 ; or lastly, as I have suggested in note on C. x. 139, of Peter Lightfoot's clock at Glastonbury ? The point that struck him was the ever-increasing velocity of the wheels, from that which revolved once in twenty-four hours to that which completed its revolution in a minute.

¹⁹ The band was that of the Apostles ; the bright fire, St. Peter. The triple revolution round Beatrice (= as elsewhere, Divine Wisdom = in the highest sense of the word, Theology),

"O holy Sister mine, whose prayers have wrought
 Such wondrous issue, by thy strong desire
 Thou sett'st me free from that sphere, beauty-fraught." 30
 Then, halting in its course, that blessed fire,
 And speaking thus, as I but now have told,
 Did to my Lady thus with voice respire.
 And she : "O light eterne of hero old,
 To whom our Lord assigned the sacred keys 35
 He bore, of wondrous joys and manifold,
 Take thou this man, and test him, if thou please,
 In points or hard or light that Faith concern,
 That Faith whereby thou walked'st on the seas.
 If with true Faith, true Hope, true Love, he burn, 40
 It is not hid from thee, since thou dost gaze
 Where all things clearly mirrored we discern.
 But since this Kingdom draws within its ways,
 Through the true faith, of citizens not few,
 'Tis meet ~~thou~~ give him scope to speak its praise." 45
 As bachelere his armour doth indue,
 And speaks not till the Master puts case clear,
 Not judging, but debating if 'tis true,
 So with my proofs I armed my memory there,
 E'en while she spake, that I might ready prove 50
 For such profession, such a questioner.

symbolises at once the doctrine of the Trinity and the three theological virtues in which Dante was to be catechised.

³⁰ The human Beatrice and the symbolised Wisdom seem alike included in St. Peter's "Sister!"

³⁵ The early commentators (*Land., Ott., Anon.*) connect this and the two following Cantos with the tradition that Dante had been accused of heresy, and that this was his *apologia*. The same story is told of the poem known as the *Cred of Dante*, and as the Dominicans are named as his judges, there would seem, if the story be true, to have been some risk of the Inquisition. The authenticity of the Creed is, to say the least, doubtful, but I have thought it worth while to translate and print it, that the reader may compare it with what is found here. If Dante's at all, it must be thought of as an experimental prelude.

⁴⁰ We note the ever-recurring thought (C. xv. 62, xvii. 123, xix. 29, xxi. 17) that the saints in Paradise "see all things in God."

⁴⁵ We have probably a distinctly personal reminiscence of university exercises in Paris, Oxford, or Bologna (*Lacvix*, pp. 16-26). Dante is, as it were, examined for his degree of Doctor of Divinity (*Sacra Theologia Professor*) in the College of the Apostles. The four terms are distinctly technical. The bachelor (possibly *vacuarius*, trained in single-stick, the word being used figuratively of mental gymnastics) is one who has passed through his *trivium* and *quadrivium*, and submits himself to a Master of Arts or Doctor in Theology for a degree in a higher faculty. The examination, as in the old *Responsions* of Oxford, is entirely *vivâ voce*. The examiner confines himself to testing the candidate's knowledge, and does not himself "determine," *i.e.*, formally discuss and settle, the questions propounded.

"Speak, O good Christian, now thyself approve ;
 Say, what is Faith ?" and then I raised my brow
 Towards the light whence these words seemed to move.
 Then I to Beatrice turned, and now 55
 Prompt signs she made to me that I should pour
 The streams that from my inner fountain flow.
 "May Grace, which grants profession of true lore,"
 So spake I to the great Centurion,
 "Now of clear thoughts well uttered give me dower ! 60
 As his true pen doth write," I then went on,
 "My father, thy dear brother's, who with thee
 Rome to the good and holy pathway won,
 Faith is the proof of things we do not see,
 The substance of things hoped for, and from hence 65
 I find what seems its formal quiddity."
 Then heard I : "Thou full rightly dost commence,
 If thou know'st well why he assigns its place
 First as a substance, then as evidence."
 And I went on and said, "The depths of grace, 70
 Which here to me themselves make manifest,
 Below, men cannot look on face to face,
 So that on Faith alone their truth they rest—
 Faith on which soaring Hope doth supervene,
 And hence the note of substance is imprest. 75
 And from this Faith it ever right hath been
 To syllogise, though nothing meet our sense ;
 And here the note of evidence is seen."

⁵⁵ The questions are probably such as were common in the schools. There the poet may have answered them in the pride of intellect. Now he prepares for his examination by a prayer for light.

⁵⁶ The Italian for "captain" (*primipilo*) is from the terminology of the Roman army, and was applied to the chief centurion of the *triarii*, the soldiers of the third rank from the front.

⁶¹ The words assume, as was natural, that St. Peter wrote the second Epistle that bears his name (see 2 *Pet.* iii. 15), and that St. Paul wrote the *Epistle to the Hebrews*.

⁶⁴ *Heb.* xi. 1 from the Vulg. Comp. Lomb. *Sent.* iii. 23 ; Aquin. *Summ.* i. 29, 2, from whom the term "*quiddity*," that which states what a thing is, is borrowed. The word has met us in C. xx. 92.

⁷⁰ The answer is accepted as true in fact, but then comes the "why?" and "wherefore?" And first as to the use of the term "substance." Heavenly things, the joys of Paradise, are hidden from the eyes of sense. For man they exist in his belief, yet, where faith is, not as imaginations only, but as realities. Faith therefore gives objectivity to that which without it would be only subjective, and so, "as hope rests upon it," it is the *substantia* of the things hoped for. What it affirms become the postulates or major premisses of syllogisms about those things, and so it is "evidence" or argument. Comp. Newman's *Grammar of Assent*, C. ix., x.

And then I heard : "If every inference
 Doctrinal were on earth thus understood, 80
 The Sophist's craft had found no permanence."
 So breathed that flame, with burning love endued,
 Then added : "Of this coin the alloy and weight
 Full well the test of thine assay have stood ;
 But if thou hast it in thy purse, pray state." 85
 And I : "Oh yes, it shines so round and bright,
 That of its mintage none can raise debate."
 Then from the depths of that transcendent light
 There came a voice, "This jewel rich and true,
 From whence each virtue draweth all its might, 90
 Whence came it to thee ?" "The abundant dew
 Of the most Holy Spirit," then said I,
 "Poured out upon the Scriptures Old and New,
 A syllogism is which doth supply
 A force so keen, that all that's else inferred 95
 Would seem, compared with it, as fallacy."
 And then, "Those axioms new and old," I heard,
 "From whence thou dost such fixed conclusions draw,
 Why dost thou hold them as God's living word ?"
 And I : "The proofs through which the truth I saw 100
 Are outcome of results where Nature's care
 Ne'er heated iron nor plied the anvil's law."
 Then answered he : "Say who doth witness bear
 Such works were wrought ? What doth the story tell
 Itself needs proof ; none else the fact declare." 105

⁷⁹ The tribute of praise may have been an echo of what the student had heard from some examiner in theology. "If all were so well armed there would be little room for heresy."

⁸⁰ The quaint form of the question has the note of a distinct personal reminiscence. It reminds us of the saying, "Be ye good money-changers," attributed to our Lord by Origen (*In Joann.* xix. 1) and Clem. Alex. (*Strom.* i. p. 354). He has given the image and super-scription of the coin. Has he the coin itself? Has he the faith which he has defined so accurately?

⁸⁷ We note the contrast between the point of certitude now attained in the "Grammar of Assent," and the doubts of C. xix. 70-90.

⁸⁹ Faith is made the source of all virtues, which are but the fruits of faith, but what is the source of faith itself?

⁹² For a parallel acknowledgment of the supreme authority of Scripture as the rule of faith see C. ix. 134, *Purg.* xxix. 83 *ss.*; and the proof of Scripture rests on its supernatural effects, not exclusively, as the word "subsequent" implies, in the historical miracles which it records, but also in the spiritual changes which it has wrought in individual men and in the world at large.

"Nay," said I, "if without a miracle
 The world was turned to Christ, that were alone
 A marvel which all else doth far excel
 For thou didst come, as poor and fasting known,
 To sow the field with that good seed that bore 110
 Of old a vine, and now a thorn is grown."
 That high and holy Court, when this was o'er,
 Their clear *Te Deum* through the spheres did sing,
 Set to the music sung where saints adore.
 And then that Baron, who, examining, 115
 Had led me on from branch to branch, until
 We to the farthest leaves our flight did wing,
 Began once more: "The grace, that with thy will
 As mistress works, thy lips oped hitherto,
 As it were well that it should open still, 120
 So that I praise what thence came out to view;
 But now 'tis meet thou tell thy faith to me,
 And whence to thy belief it came as true."
 "O holy father, spirit who dost see
 What thou didst so believe that younger feet 125
 Were at the sepulchre outstripped by thee,"
 I then began, "Thou tell'st me it is meet
 I show the form to which assent I give,
 And of the grounds thereof should also treat.
 And I respond: In one God I believe, 130
 Alone, eternal, who all Heaven doth move,
 Unmoved Himself, with love and will that live.

¹⁰⁶ The effects of Christianity on the assumption that it was not supernatural would, Dante argues, be a greater miracle than any of those which are attested by its records. To prove Scripture from miracles, and then miracles from Scripture, is accordingly something more than a *petitio principii*, or "arguing in a circle." Peter, with no earthly power to back him, had planted the vine, and it had spread its branches far and wide and borne fruit. Unhappily the vine had degenerated into a bramble (*Isai. v. 1-4*).

¹¹³ The hymn is the *Te Deum*, which had been already heard in *Purg.* ix. 140, sung now with a new and heavenly melody.

¹¹⁵ So Boccaccio (*Dec.* vi. 10) gives the title of *Baron* to St. Antony. There is perhaps a touch of Ghibellinism, or, at least, of the idealist author of the *Monarchid* in giving this name to the peers of the court of the great Emperor (*H. i. 124*). Comp. C. xxv. 17.

¹¹⁸ The praise given by Peter reminds us of the words once spoken to him (*Matt.* xvi. 17).

¹²⁶ Comp. *John* xx. 3. Dante assumes, with most interpreters, that St. Peter was older than St. John.

¹³⁰ The paraphrase that follows may be compared in its conciseness with the somewhat wordy exposition of the so-called *Credo* of Dante.

¹³¹ The thought is partly a physical explanation of the universe. The immense velocity of the *Primum Mobile* which moves all the lower spheres is itself caused by the desire to unite itself with the Empyrean Heaven as the abode of God.

And this my faith I do not seek to prove
 Only by physic, metaphysic, lore,
 But Truth bestows it, dropping from above, 135
 Through Moses, Psalms, and Prophets, and yet more,
 Through the great Gospel, and through you who wrote,
 Made holy by the Spirit's fire of yore.
 And to Three Persons I my faith devote,
 One Essence in that Trinal Unity, 140
 In whom both *Sunt* and *Est* combined we note.
 With that profound estate of Deity
 Whereof I speak, my mind hath been imprest
 Full often by the Gospel mystery.
 Here is my ground-belief, the spark at rest, 145
 Which in me spreads into a living fire,
 And, as a star in Heaven, is manifest."
 As master hearing what he doth desire,
 Joyous, his servant straightway doth embrace
 For that good news, when he of speech doth tire, 150
 So, blessing me and chanting words of grace,
 That Apostolic light, when I did cease,
 Thrice circled round me, he who bade me trace
 What thus I spake, so much my words did please.

¹³⁵ The proofs which are probably referred to are those in the *Summ.* i. 2, 3, and his *Comp. Theol.* As drawn from the postulate that all motion implies a prime mover, they are physical; as proving *a priori* that the existence of God is necessary and eternal, they are metaphysical. The modern, or Paley, argument from design is almost conspicuous by its absence. As in l. 93, the poet prefers to rest on the teaching of Scripture.

¹³⁹ The commentators for the most part explain *almi* as = holy, but it was probably formed from Latin *almus*, as from *alo*, in the sense of "productive."

¹⁴¹ *Est* is altered into *este* under the necessities of rhyme. In the Christian mystery we may say of the three Persons that they *are*; of the one God, that He *is*.

¹⁴⁵ It is noticeable that the confession of faith is not a paraphrase of the Apostles' or Nicene Creed, but of the first clauses of the *Quicunque Vult*. In that Dante sees the spark which, under a doctrine of development, expands into a flame bright as the stars of Heaven.

¹⁴⁹ What follows is, as it were, the admission of the candidate who passes his examination, to his degree. For the threefold embrace which the rector of the college gave to the new doctor we have the light, in which St. Peter was manifested, circling round the poet in token of supreme satisfaction. *Comp. C. xxiii. 96.* For the imagery of master and servant see *H. xvii. 90*, and *Cans. i. 17-19*.

CANTO XXV.

St. James examines Dante as to Hope.

SHOULD it e'er chance that this my sacred song,
 To which both Heaven and earth have so set hand,
 That it hath made me lean through years full long,
 O'ercome the cruelty that keeps me banned
 From the fair fold where I as lamb did rest, 5
 Foe of the wolves who war against the land,
 With other voice, in other fleece then drest,
 I shall return as poet, laurel-crowned,
 And at my baptism's font my brow invest;
 For there into the Faith I entrance found 10
 Which makes souls known of God, and since aright
 I held it, Peter thus my head wheeled round.
 Then towards us moved another shining light
 Out of the band from whom the first-fruits came,
 E'en those whom Christ left vicars of His might; 15
 And then my Lady, as with joy aflame,
 Said to me, "Lo, behold the Baron there,
 Through whom Galicia hath its pilgrim-fame."
 As when a dove doth near its mate repair,
 And with their cooing and their circling ways 20
 Each gives to each the proof of love's sweet care;

¹ The opening lines have the interest of revealing the poet's consciousness of the greatness of his work as he drew towards its completion. For years it had absorbed his energies and made him prematurely old and thin. Would it ever gain for him that return to the city that he loved for which he thirsted, and which still shut its gates against him except on conditions which were so humiliating that he rejected them with scorn? (vol. i. p. cxx., *Ep.* 10). The hope that his poem would overcome the hatred of his fellow-citizens, that he might yet be received with the laureate crown, which had never as yet been given to any poet who wrote in Italian (*Famr.* i. 241), was, as his first *Ep.* to Joannes de Virgilio (l. 42) shows, strong within him. His own beloved and "beautiful St. John's" might yet receive him in that character. As it was, the hope was destined to be disappointed and the laurel wreath was only placed by Guido Novello on the forehead of his corpse (*Famr.* i. 244). It is noticeable, however, that he uses not the word *corona*, but *cappello*, the *biretta* or cap which in the University of Paris was the sign of the doctor's degree (as in the "capping" still retained in Scotch Universities), and thus the thought grows naturally out of the examination in the previous Canto.

¹⁵ The new light is St. James the Greater, who afterwards examines the candidate as to Hope.

¹⁷ For "Baron" see C. xxiv. 115 n. In mediæval legends St. James preached in Spain before his martyrdom at Jerusalem, and his body was brought to Compostella and buried there. Of all pilgrimages, that to his shrine was the most popular (*V. N.* c. 41).

¹⁹ We are reminded of the comparison in *H.* v. 82.

So saw I one who bore a name of praise,
 As glorious prince thus greeted by his mate,
 While to their food on high their hymns they raise.
 But when their greetings fond did terminate, 25
 Silently *coram me* they both stood still,
 So bright, my power of gazing did abate.
 Then Beatrice smiling spake her will :
 " O glorious life, by whom the largess great
 Hath been described that doth our Palace fill, 30
 Let Hope's name echo in this high estate :
 Thou know'st that thou didst Hope embody there
 Where Jesus did the Three illuminate."
 " Lift up thy head and be of better cheer ;
 For that which comes here from the world below 35
 Must needs be ripened in our radiance clear."
 This comfort from the second flame did flow ;
 So to the hills I lifted up mine eyes,
 The hills whose great weight erst had bent them so.
 " Since in His grace our Emperor bids thee rise, 40
 That face to face thou find thee, ere thou die,
 With all His Counts, in Hall that inmost lies,
 So that, the truth of this Court seen on high,
 To Hope, that kindles love on earth aright,
 Thou, for thyself and others, strength supply ; 45
 Say what it is, and how in its sweet might
 Thy soul may bud and blossom, and declare
 Whence it came to thee." So that second Light ;
 And that kind Saint who gave me pitying care,
 And for so high a flight my wings did guide, 50
 Made answer for me ere I was aware :

²⁴ The "food," as in C. xxiv. 1, is the bread of angels at the marriage-supper of the Lamb.

²⁵ The readings vary, *la larghezza* and *l'allegrezza*. I follow the former.

³⁰ "Basilica" (=palace) is used in both its Christian and its classical senses, as being at once the Church of the redeemed and the Court of the great Emperor (l. 41).

³² The thought that the chosen witnesses of the Transfiguration (*Matt.* xvii. 1) were respectively the representatives of Faith, Hope, and Love is found in Aquinas, *Summ.* iii. 45, 3.

³⁶ The words are an echo of *Ps.* cxxi. 1, but the "hills" in this case are the three great Apostles.

⁴² "Counts," like the "Baron" of l. 17, follow fitly from the idea of the Heavenly Emperor. Comp. C. xii. 40, xxiv. 115 ; *H.* i. 124.

⁴⁶ It will be noted that the one question includes the three that had come from the lips of St. Peter in C. xxiv. 53-112.

"Of all her sons, not one more fortified
 With Hope hath the Church Militant than he ;
 Witness that Sun in whose light we abide.
 Wherefore from Egypt he hath grace to flee 55
 Before his warfare is accomplished,
 And here the blest Jerusalem to see.
 The other questions thou hast uttered,
 Not for thy knowledge, but that he may tell
 With what delight thou hast on this grace fed, 60
 To him I leave ; they are not hard to spell,
 Nor minister to boasting ; let him speak,
 And may God's grace give strength to answer well."
 As scholar who his master's mind doth seek
 To follow, prompt and quick, because expert, 65
 That he may show how strong hath grown the weak,
 "Hope," said I, "is expectancy alert
 Of future glory, and it comes when we
 God's grace and foregone merit can assert.
 From many stars that light has come to me, 70
 But he was first to pour it in my heart
 Who of high Sovereign sang high psalmody.
 'Sperent in te,' so doth his anthem start,
 'E'en those who know Thy name.' Who fails to know
 That has the faith in which I claim a part ? 75
 From him distilled the thoughts that from thee flow
 In thine Epistle, so that I abound,
 And shower thy rain on others now below."

⁵² The description is suggestive as indicating Dante's estimate of himself. Hope, so he thought, never failed him, not even after the death of Beatrice, or the decree which banished him from Florence, or the failure of Henry's VII.'s enterprise. That was the reason why, even in his lifetime, he had been allowed to pass from Egypt to the Heavenly Jerusalem. The words of l. 55 are an echo at once of *Ps.* cxiv. 1 (comp. *Purg.* ii. 46) and *Heb.* xii. 22.

⁵³ The question whether the candidate had hope, as he had faith, would have involved an apparently boastful, even if true, answer. Not so with the others.

⁵⁴ Another reminiscence, as in C. xxiv. 46, of the feelings of the student under examination.

⁵⁷ The definition tallies with Lomb. *Scntt.* iii. 26, Aquinas, *Summ.* ii. 2. 17, 1. It springs from the union of divine grace with the "merit" which accrues from the co-operation of the will with that grace.

⁷² David is the "chief singer," the Holy Spirit the chief captain.

⁷⁴ The words quoted are from *Ps.* ix. 10, as in the *Vulg.* and *Rom. Brev.* for Sunday Matins. Hope is represented as the outcome of faith.

⁷⁷ The son of Zebedee is identified by Dante with the writer of the *Epistle of St. James*. The same view has been held by some writers, notably by the Rev. F. T. Bassett (*Ep. of St. James*, 1876), but the general *consensus* of critics goes the other way, and assigns the *Epistle* to James, the brother of the Lord. At first sight that *Epistle* does not appear to deal specially with Hope, but Dante may have had in his thoughts *Jas.* i. 2, 5, 12, 25, iii. 18, iv. 8, 10, v. 8, 15, 16. Promises imply hope, though hope may not be named.

And while I spake, within the heart profound
 Of that clear flame there thrilled a flash of light, 80
 Frequent and swift, like lightning, darting round ;
 Then breathed, "The love which in me burneth bright
 Towards the virtue that attended me,
 E'en to the palm and issue of the fight,
 Wills that I breathe, that so as thine there be 85
 Delight in her ; and much joy would be mine
 To hear what Hope doth promise unto thee."
 And I : "The Scriptures New and Old define
 Full clear, the goal ; and this proof shows it well.
 Of souls who of God's friendship bear the sign, 90
 Isaiah saith that each new-clothed shall dwell
 With twofold raiment in his own true land ;
 And that land is this life delectable.
 And this thy brother hath more clearly scanned,
 There where he treats of garments clean and white, 95
 Revealing it for us to understand."
 And then, when scarce his words were ended quite,
 "Sperent in te" I heard above us sound,
 Echoed by all the dancing sons of light.
 And then among them one so bright was found, 100
 That were such crystal seen in Cancer's sign,
 A winter month would as one day pass round.

⁸⁴ The limitation is in strict accordance with Aquin. (*Summ.* ii. 2, 18 n.) Strictly speaking, there is no hope for the blessed, for it has passed into fruition. Incidentally, however, they may hope (1) for the blessedness of others ; (2) for the completion of their own blessedness at the Resurrection.

⁸⁵ I see no reason, as some critics do, for departing from the usual punctuation and construction of the Italian.

⁹¹ The reference is to *Isa.* lxi. 7, where, however, there is no mention of vestures, but simply "*duplicita possidebunt*." Possibly the "*duplex pannus*" of Hor. *Epp.* i. 17, 25, may have suggested the interpretation, or, as in the case of English and old French "doublet," the word may have come into use, without a noun, for a special kind of garment. The "land" is Heaven ; the double vesture is the bliss of the soul and of the resurrection-body. *Lub.* quotes from St. Bernard (*Serm.* iii. p. 190), "*Acceperunt jam singulas stolas, sed non vestiuntur duplicibus, donec vestiamur ei nos*." For other traces of St. Bernard's influence see C. xxxi. 102.

⁹⁴ Comp. *Rev.* vii. 9.

⁹⁵ The verse which had been quoted by Dante before is now taken up and chanted in the language of the Church by all the souls.

¹⁰⁰ The soul that now appears is that of St. John. In winter the sun is in Capricorn, and Cancer, which is opposite to it, is seen at night. But if Cancer had a star like St. John, such as Dante now beheld him, night would be turned to day, and the day would last a month.

And, as a maiden blithe stands up to join
 The dance in honour of a new-made bride,
 Not for vain show, but with that one design, 105
 So saw I that bright splendour glorified
 Move to the two, who circled as they went,
 In fashion that their strong love satisfied.
 It joined their dance and song with full consent,
 And my dear Lady gazed with look firm pressed, 110
 Like to a silent bride with form unbent.
 "See, here is he that lay upon the breast
 Of Him who is our mystic Pelican ;
 He from the Cross was named for office blest."
 So spake my Lady ; yet, when she began, 115
 And when her words were ended, still she stood,
 With gaze that turned not. Even as a man
 Who looks, with all his might, in wistful mood,
 To see the sun eclipsed a little space,
 And tasks his sight, till lost sight hath ensued, 120
 So was I with that last fire face to face ;
 And then I heard, " Why dazzelest thou thine eye
 To see a thing which here doth find no place ?
 In earth my body rests, as earth shall lie
 With all the rest, until our number reach 125
 The limit fixed from all eternity.

¹⁰⁸ I note once more the recurrence of the pictures of the brightness of the early scenes of youth which come back upon the mind of the fast ageing poet (*Purg.* xxviii. 1-63 *ss.*) This reminds us of *V. N.* c. 14.

¹¹⁰ The picture, beautiful as a painting of Fra Angelico's in itself has, of course, its anagogic or mystic meaning. Beatrice, as Heavenly Wisdom, finds joy in contemplating the teaching of St. Peter, St. James, and St. John as to the three supernatural graces.

¹¹³ The mystical interpretation of *Ps.* cii. 6 probably suggested the symbolism. "The pelican was said to quicken its young to life or to revive them when fainting by blood from its own breast, and so the Psalmist's words were taken as prophetic of Christ's redeeming blood." The symbol occurs frequently in mediæval art and poetry. So in the Eucharistic hymn of Aquinas, "*Adoro te devote*," we find the line *Pie Pelicane Domine Jesu* (*Bull.*) The "grand office" to which St. John was chosen was that indicated in the words "Behold thy Mother" (*John* xix. 27). Comp. Neale, J. M., *Mæd. Hymns*, p. 176.

¹¹⁶ I follow *mosser* instead of *v. l. mosse*, and "*le parole*" for "*alle parole*."

¹¹⁹ The image comes straight, like that of the comet in *C.* xxiv. 12, from the experience of the student of astronomy. The man attempts to gaze on a partial eclipse of the sun through a lens or spectacles (I take this to be implied in *s'argomenta*), and then finds himself dazzled as Dante was when he looked at St. John. (Comp. vol. i. p. liv.)

¹²⁴ After all, what he sees is not the glory of the body that shall be, but only that of the provisional tabernacle of the soul in its intermediate state. The body waits in its grave for the resurrection-day, and that will not come till God has "accomplished the number of His elect." The dogma employed in the words just used, which I have purposely quoted from the Burial Service of the Prayer-Book, was received as an axiom by Augustine (*De Corrupt. et Grat.* c. 13), and by Aquinas (l. 23, 7), and was connected with the belief that the elect were exactly to fill up the gap caused by the fall of the rebel angels, the number of which, though not known to us (*C.* xxix. 134 *ss.*), is known to God.

Two lights alone, endued with two robes each,
 In this blest convent mounted up on high,
 And this the world shall gather from thy speech."
 And at this voice that shining company 130
 Paused, and with them the dulcet song and dance
 Born of the breath of those illustrious three,
 As oars, that leapt and made the waters glance,
 With rest from toil, or danger drawing nigh,
 At boatswain's whistle stay their swift advance. 5
 Ah! how my mind then felt perplexity,
 When I on Beatrice turned to gaze,
 And could not see her, though I stood hard by,
 Close at her side, and in that world of praise!

CANTO XXVI.

St. John examines Dante as to Love—The Soul of Adam.

WHILE I was thus perplexed, mine eyesight gone,
 Out from the flame that quenched it, burning bright,
 There came a voice that my attention won,
 And said, "While thou art winning back the sight
 That now, through me, from thee hath vanished, 5
 'Tis meet that speech should set the balance right.
 Begin then now, and say to what are led
 Thy thoughts, and hold it certain thou canst prove,
 Thy vision, though bewildered, is not dead;
 Since that thy Guide in this bright realm above, 10
 Thy Lady dear, hath in her look the skill
 That did the hand of Ananias move."

¹³⁰ The "two lights" are taken by most commentators to refer to Christ and the Virgin, but I see nothing to prevent our taking them as Enoch and Elijah. The statement is an implied protest against the early legends that St. John was to pass to Paradise not through the gates of death (*John* xxi. 23). The "two robes" are the earthly and heavenly bodies (l. 92).

¹³¹ The simile is an almost literal reproduction of Statius (*Theb.* iv. 805, vi. 799).

¹³² In St. John, in his character as *Theologus* ("St. John the Divine" in *A. V.*), Dante finds a splendour which outshines even that of Beatrice as representing Theology. That which was glorious loses its glory in the presence of the glory that excelleth (*2 Cor.* iii. 10).

¹ St. John enters on his examination of the candidate as to Charity, which Dante takes as equivalent to the highest form of Love.

² Ananias had with his hand restored the power of sight to St. Paul after his conversion (*Acts* ix. 17). So it had been the work of Beatrice to give clearness of vision to her disciple's mind; but with her a look sufficed, and the hand was not needed.

I said: "Or swift or slow, at her good will,
 Come health to eyes that were an open door
 Where she came in with fire that burns me still ! 15
 The Good that on this Court doth blessings pour,
 The Alpha and Omega is of all
 That Love reads, low or loud, in His sweet lore."
 That very voice that freed me from the thrall
 And sudden terror of bedazzlement, 20
 To speak yet further did my purpose call,
 And said, "Full surely thou must be content
 To sift with finer sieve, and thou must tell
 Who to such target hath thy bow thus bent."
 And I: "By philosophic proof taught well, 25
 And by authority descending hence,
 'Tis meet that such love in my heart should dwell ;
 For good, as good, so far as meets our sense,
 Doth straight enkindle love, and all the more
 As the good in it groweth more intense ; 30
 So to that Essence which prevaieth o'er
 All others, so that each good not in It
 Is but a ray which Its own light doth pour,
 More than to any other, 'tis most fit,
 The mind should yield its love, if it discern 35
 The truth that this high argument doth hit.
 Such truth he bids my reason clearly learn
 Who shows to me that Love is primal Lord
 Of all we know as substances eterne.

¹⁵ The words throw us back upon the early experiences of the *V. N.*, especially, perhaps, of c. 19. Then the fire had been kindled which had never ceased to burn.

¹⁶ The good is the vision of God, the "Good Supreme of mind" (*H.* iii. 18). That is the Alpha and Omega of every Scripture that teaches what true Love is. Comp. *Ep.* xi. 33.

²² The object of Love has been rightly stated, but a closer sifting of the question was needed. By what process is the soul of man, inclin'g naturally to earthly things, led to seek that Supreme Good? The answer is that Reason and Revelation alike give a basis for Love. The great masters of those who know, notably Plato and Aristotle, had both affirmed that man's nature seeks its own good; the former, that it was to be found only in absolute goodness. C. 26 is almost a quotation from *Mon.* ii. 1.

³¹ The words might be illustrated by parallels from a hundred writers. Dante was probably following in the steps of Augustine (*Conf.* i. 1, "*Fecisti nos ad Te, et inquietum est cor nostrum donec requiescat in Te*") and Aquinas (*Summ.* i. 6, 4). If there is one Supreme Good, from which all others flow, there, and there only, can man's yearnings rest. C. xvi. 90.

³⁹ What has just been said is illustrated by the many names which commentators have suggested for the teacher spoken of: Aristotle, Plato, Pythagoras, Dionysius the Areopagite, St. Peter. It would be easy to lengthen the list by adding the two names of the previous note, or Buonaventura, or St. Bernard, or Hugh or Richard or Adam of St. Victor. The "substances eterne" are the angels and the souls of men. Comp. *Purg.* xi. 1-3.

And the true Teacher's voice brought Moses word, 40
 Of Himself speaking, 'I to thee alone
 A vision of all goodness will accord :'
 Thou too dost bid me learn it, making known
 The message high of Truth concealed before,
 Which tells to earth what in this Heaven is shown." 45
 Then heard I : " Led by light of human lore,
 And by concordant high authority,
 Give God thy sovran love for evermore ;
 But say again if other cords there be
 That draw thee to Him, so that thou attest 50
 The many teeth wherewith Love biteth thee."
 Not hidden from me was the purpose blest
 Of Christ's own Eagle ; whither he did mean
 To lead my speech to me was manifest ;
 So I resumed, " Those bites so sharp and keen, 55
 That help to turn man's heart to God on high,
 With this my love are all accordant seen.
 The world's existence, my humanity,
 The death that He endured that I might live,
 And that which all the faithful hope as I, 60
 With the clear knowledge which these reasonings give,
 Have drawn me from the sea of love perverse
 Safe to the shore where true love I conceive.

⁴³ The words have a special force in their *Vulg.* form, "*Ego ostendam omne bonum meum tibi.*" Dante's equivalent "*valore,*" is a favourite word with him. C. x. 3; *Purg.* xi. 4, xv. 72.

⁴⁴ Here again the question what words of St. John were in Dante's mind admits of more than one tenable answer : (1) *John* i. 1-14, (2) *John* iv., or (3) *Rev.* xxi., xxii. I incline to (2).

⁴⁵ So far the answers have been satisfactory. It remains that they should pass into act, and that the "sovran" love should be kept for the "sovran" Good.

⁴⁶ The question involves two metaphors. Man is drawn to God by many cords (*Hor.* xi. 4). Love bites into the soul, now in one way, now in another.

⁴⁷ The eagle was the symbol of St. John in the received interpretation of *Ezek.* i. 10, *Rev.* iv. 7. The hymn of Adam of St. Victor (Trench, *Sac. Latin Poetry*, p. 67) is the fullest statement of the symbolism. A verse from a writer of the same school (*ibid.* p. 72), which Dante may have known, already quoted in its original form in C. i. 48 n., may be given here in an English version—

"As eagle winging loftiest flight,
 Where never seer's or prophet's sight
 Had pierced the ethereal vast,
 Pure beyond human purity,
 He scanned, with still undazzled eye,
 The future and the past."

⁴⁸ The answer states that Dante, in a living personal experience, had felt the force of every impulse by which the soul is led to God. The wisdom and power of God as seen in creation, the beauty of His goodness, the love shown in His redeeming work, the daily gifts of Providence or grace, the yearning of his soul for peace, he had felt the power of all as converging to the purest form of Love.

⁴⁹ The words point back to *H.* i. 24. There is the "troubled sea" of perverted love on the one side, the calm bright ocean of true eternal Love on the other. And that love so fills the

I on the leaves that clothe the universe,
 The Eternal Gardener's garden, love bestow, 65
 As each contains the good He doth disperse."
 When I was silent, sweetest song did flow
 Through all the Heaven, and my Lady too
 With them cried "Holy, Holy, Holy!" So,
 As sleep departs when some keen light we view, 70
 Through visual power which goeth forth to meet
 The ray that every membrane passeth through,
 And the awakened sleeper doth retreat
 From what he sees, aroused so suddenly,
 Until his reason gives him succour meet; 75
 So from mine eyes did every sunmote flee
 Before the rays of Beatrice's light,
 That o'er a thousand miles shone gloriously;
 Whence clearer than before I found my sight,
 And I began to ask, with wondering gaze, 80
 Of a fourth flame that did with us unite.
 And then my Lady: "Here, within these rays,"
 The first soul that the First Power ever made
 Looks on its Maker with adoring praise."
 And, as a bough, by passing breeze low laid, 85
 Bendeth its top, then riseth up again,
 By its own proper virtue upward swayed,
 So was I, as I listened to her strain,
 Astonied; then new courage soon I won,
 Through strong desire that burnt to speak again, 90
 And I began: "O fruit who wast alone
 Created fully ripe, O ancient sire,
 Who dost each bride as twice a daughter own,

poet's heart that it embraces even the leaves of the trees that are in the Paradise of God (*Rev.* xxii 2), each in proportion as it manifests the Love and Wisdom of the "eternal Gardener" (*Summ.* ii. 2. 26, 6).

⁶⁸ The hymn is that of *Isai.* vi. 3, *Rev.* iv. 8. It is perhaps more to the point to remember that the *Ter Sanctus* is also the noblest of the Church's liturgical hymns, and that Dante had perhaps heard it sung at the Easter Mass of 1300 in the Basilica of St. Peter's at Rome, when the thought of the *Commedia*, and of its consummation in the *Paradiso* first began to take shape (vol. i. p. lxvii.)

⁷⁰ We note the profound symbolism. Now that the poet is found perfect in love, the contemplative power, the spiritual vision, is keener and clearer than before, and he sees Beatrice (= Divine Wisdom), whom a little while before (*C.* xxv. 138) he had failed to see. And with her he sees a fourth form, besides those of the three Apostles, and learns that it is that of Adam.

⁸⁵ The poet's classical memories are with him still, and the lines are almost a translation of Stat. *Theb.* vi. 854-857.

⁹¹ We note the strange mingling of scholastic fancies which gathered round the thought of

With all my soul devoutly I desire
 That thou would'st speak to me ; thou know'st my will ; ⁹⁵
 I speak not, but to quickly hear aspire."
 As oft we see some poor brute moving still,
 All covered up, and all the wrapping shows
 The strong affection that its breast doth fill,
 Thus did that soul primeval then disclose, ¹⁰⁰
 So that it shone through all its covering bright,
 What joy to meet my wish within it rose ;
 Then spake : " Though thou hast not yet brought to light
 Thy wish, to me 'tis more distinct and clear
 Than aught most certain that thou see'st aright, ¹⁰⁵
 Because I see it in that Mirror fair,
 Wherein are imaged all the things that be,
 While nothing can of It full image bear.
 Thou seek'st to know what time hath past for me,
 Since God in this high garden set my feet, ¹¹⁰
 Where now this dame by long climb leadeth thee ;
 How long mine eyes enjoyed this blissful seat,
 And what the true cause of the wrath divine,
 And in what speech my thoughts found utterance meet.
 Know then, my son, 'twas not mere act of mine, ¹¹⁵
 Tasting the tree, that such an exile wrought,
 But the transgressing God's appointed line.

the first created man. Every woman was a daughter of Adam ; as marrying a son of Adam she became his daughter-in-law. Is there a half touch of humour in speaking of him as the "fruit created ripe," all too soon eating of the forbidden fruit, also created ripe?

¹⁰⁰ Commentators, sensitive as to the dignity of the poetry, have been scandalised at the homeliness of the comparison, but for that very reason it is all the more especially Dantesque. (Comp. C. viii. 54, xvii. 129, xxxii. 140.) One wonders what animal he had in his mind. Shall I shock the critics yet more if I suggest a cat? Had it been a dog, it would have been natural to say so, but even Dante may have shrunk from *un gatto*. There is, it may be noted, a floating anecdote about his having trained a cat to hold a candle (Crane, *Ital. Stories*, p. 309, from Pitre, *Fiavole e Novelle*, No. 200), which makes my conjecture probable. To me the word "*braglia*" seems to suggest the undulatory movement of a cat's body as it purrs in supreme delight. Those who remember Bishop Thirlwall and his cat "Lion," not to speak of "Montaigne playing with his cat," will recognise the adaptation of that animal to the taste of the scholar and the thinker.

¹⁰⁴ The exceptional *v. l.* which gives the poet's name *Dante* instead of *Dante* deserves a passing notice, but has no claim to our acceptance.

¹⁰⁷ The general thought is that of C. xv. 62, that the saints in Paradise see all things in God. All things are seen imaged in that Mirror, but nothing created, though it may reflect a portion of the Divine Glory, can be said to present its image with the perfect clearness of a mirror. By some writers the Italian "*pareggio*" is taken as = the parheliion, the "mock sun," seen in the sky under certain conditions of refraction, but without sufficient reason.

¹⁰⁹ The soul of Adam had divined the questioning thoughts which were in Dante's mind, and which he shared with most mediæval interpreters of *Gen.* i.-iii., and answers them one by one.

¹¹⁰ The garden is the earthly Paradise where Beatrice met Dante (*Purg.* xxviii. 92).

¹¹⁵ The answer is almost literally from Aquinas (*Summ.* ii. 2. 73, 1). The first human sin

There, whence to thee thy Lady Virgil brought,
 For years four thousand, hundreds three, and two,
 This great assembly yearned I for in thought, 120
 And I beheld the sun its course pursue,
 Through all its signs nine hundred years and more,
 Thrice ten, whilst earth was yet within my view.
 The language that I spake was past and o'er,
 Ere in that work they never could complete 125
 The race of Nimrod toil and trouble bore ;
 For works of human reason still are fleet,
 Through varying will of man, that seeks the new,
 As the stars sway his course, their end to meet.
 That man should speak, to natural law is due, 130
 But whether thus or thus, doth Nature leave
 To you to choose, as best it pleaseth you.
 Ere me the infernal anguish did receive,
 'I' was the earthly name of that Chief Good
 Who now the joy that swathes me round doth give : 135
 'Eli,' He next was called ; for as a wood,
 Where one leaf cometh and another goes,
 So needs must be all works of human mood.

was not the mere act of eating the forbidden fruit, but the desire of spiritual good *ultra mensuram*, and this implies pride and rebellion against God.

119 The numbers imply 930 years of life (*Gen.* v. 5), 4302 in the *Limbus Patrum* from which the soul of Adam was released by the Descent into Hades. The chronology adopted is that of Eusebius based on the LXX., not the Ussherian reckoning based on the Hebrew, with which the margin of our Authorised Version has made us familiar. This estimate gives B.C. 5900, and not 4004, as the date of Adam's creation.

124 In the *V. E.* i. 6 Adam is said to have spoken Hebrew as it was afterwards spoken by the children of Heber (*Gen.* x. 25, xi. 16). Here Dante retracts that view. We are left to guess why. I incline to think that he may have followed the tradition of some of his Jewish friends (vol. i. p. lxxv.), but the question is scarcely worth discussing.

127 The non-completion of the Tower of Babel is represented not as an exceptional catastrophe, but as a logical instance that nothing that originates only in human will and stellar influences has in it the elements of permanence (*Comp. H.* xxxi. 77).

130 Dante's theory of language as the outcome of man's natural powers guided by his will has been adopted by Max Müller, who takes these lines (130-132) as the motto of his *Science of Languages* (2d Edition).

134 The J or I (that reading is preferable to *Ei* or *Un*) stands probably for the Jah or Jehovah of *Exod.* vi. 5. The "El," "Eli," have probably originated in a desire to make the passage agree with *V. E.* i. 4 ; but then, as we have seen, the whole passage has the character of a retraction of what he had there taught. "Un," though found in not a few MSS. and early editions, has little to recommend it. The Hebrew *Yod* had probably been shown to Dante by some Jewish friend, such as Immanuel of Rome (vol. i. p. lxxv.), as the symbol of the sacred *Tetragrammaton*. The texts that give *Eli* in l. 134 give *Eli* in l. 136.

137 An obvious reproduction of *Hor. A. P.* 60-62.

I, in that Mount that o'er the waters rose,
 Dwelt with a life, first pure, then marked with shame, 140
 From the first hour to that which followed close
 Upon the sixth, when change of quadrant came."

CANTO XXVII.

*St. Peter on his corrupt Successors—The Ascent to the Primum Mobile—
 The Evil of the Times.*

"To Father, Son, and Holy Ghost," began
 That *Gloria*, chanted by all Paradise,
 And I was drunk with joy, so sweet it ran.
 It was as though a smile did meet mine eyes
 From all creation, so that joy's excess, 5
 Through sight and hearing did my mind surprise.
 O bliss, O joy, no mortal may express !
 O life filled full with love and peace, good store !
 O riches, free from selfish eagerness !
 Before mine eyes stood still the torches four, 10
 All burning clear, and that which first came near
 Began to grow yet brighter than before,

¹⁴⁰ The question had received various answers; among them, eight-and-forty days and thirty-four years. The prevailing tradition gave a few hours. Dante fixes the Paradise life as lasting from 6 A.M. to a little after noon. One wonders in all cases what were the *data* for the calculation; but the mediæval mind did not much trouble itself about the limits of the knowable. In the apparent motion of the sun it passes over a quadrant in six hours. On the ecclesiastical division of the hours see *Conv.* iv. 23.

¹ The doxology comes fitly at the close of the examination in Faith, Hope, and Love. We must believe that the words describe what Dante had often felt as he listened to the actual *Gloria* in the cathedrals of Verona or Ravenna.

³ An echo of the *Vulg.* of *Ps.* xxxv. 9 "*Inebriabuntur ab ubertate domus Tue; et torrentis voluptatis Tue potabis eos.*" The "smile of all creation" though, as a phrase, especially Dantean, may, if I mistake not, be also traced to liturgical impressions, such, *e.g.*, as would be made by the closing words of the magnificent sequence for the Sunday after Easter (I quote from the *Sarum Missal*)—

"*Astra, solum, mare, jocundentur,
 Et cuncti gratulentur,
 In calis spiritales chori,
 Trinitati.*"

¹⁰ The four torches are, it will be remembered, the souls of SS. Peter, James, John, and Adam. Peter begins, and bursts into the fierce invective, called forth, we must believe, by the latest report which had reached Ravenna from Avignon, where John XXII. was bringing the Church, year by year, to lower and lower depths of degradation, though, from the assumed date of the poem, the words refer strictly to Boniface VIII.

And such in look and fashion did appear,
 As Jupiter and Mars would be, if they
 Were birds, and should each other's plumage wear. 15
 That Providence which here on all doth lay
 Appointed time and office, on that choir
 Had laid commands awhile all song to stay;
 And then I heard a voice, "No more admire
 That thus so changed in hue thine eyes I meet, 20
 For, as I speak, all these shall change attire.
 He who on earth usurpeth now my seat,
 My seat, my seat, I say, which to the eye
 Of God's dear Son is vacant at His feet,
 He of my burial-place hath made a sty 25
 Of blood and filth, wherein the Evil One,
 Who fell from Heaven, himself doth satisfy!"
 And lo! the hue wherewith the opposing sun
 Paints all the clouds at morning or at eve,
 The heavens through all their wide extent had won; 30
 And as a maiden pure and chaste doth grieve,
 Sure of herself, to hear another's sin,
 And e'en to hear it thrill of fear doth leave,
 Thus Beatrice's face to change was seen:
 So deem I in the passion of our King 35
 Such dark eclipse veiled all the heaven serene.
 Then further words he went on uttering,
 With voice so altered as its accents rolled,
 The change of look was not a stranger thing.

¹⁵ Mars was the redder of the two planets, Jupiter the brighter. Assume them to change their plumage and Jupiter becomes fiery red. So St. Peter became as Dante looked on him.

²² The threefold iteration is after the manner of the poet's favourite prophet (*Jer.* vii. 4, xxii. 29).

²³ Probably the words imply a denial of the validity of Celestine V.'s resignation (*H.* iii. 60), and therefore of that of the election of his successor. The throne which Boniface filled was, of right, vacant.

²⁶ The words doubtless paint Rome as Dante had seen it in 1300, but they were true also of Avignon in 1320, perhaps more intensely true.

²⁸ The fiery flush of righteous wrath over the whole Heaven is obviously contrasted with the "smile of the universe" in l. 4.

³¹ Obviously here also there is one of the poet's memories. So he had seen the living Beatrice look as she, in her purity, heard of evil in others (*P. N.* c. 10; *Canz.* ii. 31-37). So the transfigured Beatrice, who has become one with the heavenly wisdom, must look on the evils of the Church.

" Christ's Spouse was not with blood upreared of old, 40
 My own, and that of Linus, Cletus too,
 To serve but as a tool for gain of gold ;
 But to gain life, the joyful and the true,
 Sixtus, Callistus, Pius, Urban, all
 Shed their own blood, and bitter weeping knew. 45
 'Twas not our purpose that our heirs should call
 Half Christ's flock to their right hand, while the left
 Should to the other half as portion fall ;
 Nor that the keys which with me once were left
 Should be the symbol of the flag of fight 50
 Against a host of baptism not bereft ;
 Nor that I should, engraved on seal, give right
 To venal and corrupt monopolies,
 Which make me blush and kindle at the sight.
 Fierce wolves in shepherds' garb, with greedy eyes, 55
 Are seen from hence through all the meadows fair.
 Vengeance of God, why dost thou not arise ?
 Gascons and Caorsines themselves prepare
 To drink our life-blood. O beginning good,
 To what vile issue hast thou fallen there ! 60
 But Foresight high, that Scipio endued
 With strength to guard Rome's glorious majesty,
 Will soon bring help : thus have I understood.

⁴⁰ The invective continues in words more applicable to John XXII. than to Boniface. One after another the names of the early bishops of Rome who had shed their blood, including St. Peter himself, are recited by way of contrast to the infamy of the Gascon and the Caorsine pontiffs, Clement V. and John XXII. The individual history of each Pope necessarily lies outside the range of a commentary, and may, of course, be found in any Church history. Comp. vol. i. p. cxii.; H. C. xi. 56 n.

⁴⁵ One crying evil was that the Popes had shown themselves not the high-priests of Christendom, but the princes of a party. The Guelphs were at their right hand, the Ghibellines on their left (*Matt.* xxv. 33). Comp. *H.* xxvii. 85.

⁴⁹⁻⁵⁴ The keys first appeared on the Papal banner in 1229 (*Murat. Ann.* 1229). For the figure of St. Peter in the seal of the Fisherman, see C. xviii. 136, *Purg.* xxii. 63. Line 51 probably refers specially to the wars of Boniface with the Colonnas, but was only too true of the whole history of the Papacy.

⁵³ The sale of patronage, papal and episcopal as well as lay, culminated under John XXII. Here again the contemporary records of an English diocese (Bath and Wells) illustrate the wide-spread corruption (Bishop Drokensford's *Register*, vol. i. p. xlv., lxxxvi., cxvi).

⁵⁷ The readings vary between *difesa* and *vendetta*, the latter being probably an explanatory gloss. "Defence of God" is hardly, I think, an adequate rendering.

⁶⁰ The words, ideally spoken in 1300, are as a prophecy *ex eventu*. The veil is dropped. There was a lower depth even than that of Boniface, and it was found in the Pope who lived when Dante wrote the *Canto*, and in his immediate predecessor.

⁶¹ Had Dante, we ask, any concrete Scipio in his mind, or is it only the eternal hope which had before found utterance in the Veltro prophecy of *H.* i. 101 and in that of the DVX of *Purg.* xxxiii. 43? Can Grande, we remember, was still living, and the poet-prophet had not given up the hope that he would prove the ideal reformer.

And thou, my son, whose path doth downward lie,
 Still burdened with the flesh, ope thou thy lips, 65
 And what I hide not, hide not thou." Then I,
 E'en as the frozen vapour downward slips
 In whirling flakes, what time the Goat in heaven,
 To touch the sun, his horns in winter dips,
 Beheld through all the expanse of ether driven, 70
 But upwards, flakes of vapour full of joy,
 That had to us awhile their presence given.
 To track their semblance did mine eyes employ,
 And they looked on, till space 'tween them and me
 The power of passing farther did destroy. 75
 And then my Lady, seeing me set free
 From gazing on the heavens, said, "Downward turn
 Thy glance, and where thy course hath wheeled thee, see."
 Then, since I first had downward looked, I learn
 That I had passed through all the quadrant wide 80
 Within whose bounds the first clime we discern ;
 So that I saw, on Gades' farther side,
 Ulysses' wild track, and on this the shore
 Whence once Europa, burden dear, did ride.
 And further had to me this little floor 85
 Of ours been open laid, but that the sun
 Had gone beneath my feet a Sign or more.
 My mind enamoured, ever dallying on
 With that my Lady, more than ever sought
 To bring back every look to her alone. 90

⁶⁴ The mission from the chief of the Apostles completes that which had been symbolised by the "crown and mitre" of *Purg.* xxvii. 142. We are reminded of *Rev.* i. 19.

⁶⁵ The line describes the winter solstice when the sun is in Capricorn. As at such a time the air might be seen thick with snowflakes, so now was the ether of heaven thick as with a snow-shower in which the flakes were souls in glory ; but the shower rose instead of falling, and vanished in the Empyrean. While he gazes, he passes, in his ecstasy, unawares into the ninth sphere, the *Primum Mobile*.

⁷⁰ When he had last looked down, it had been from the stars of Gemini (C. xxii. 133-154).

⁸¹ Like most of the descriptions clothed in the language of an obsolete stage of science, the line is to us difficult and obscure. The best illustration is found in *Cowp.* iii. 5, where the "great" or mid-circle is defined as "the arc of the sky through an arc corresponding to one traced on a globe from the equator to the two imaginary cities of the earth. What he says here is that he referred to is remarkable, as actually seen in darkness. Butler conjectures "the passage of the sun" or meaning.

And if or art or nature e'er have wrought
 Food for the eyes wherewith to take the mind,
 In human flesh, or skill hath likeness caught,
 All joined together I as nought should find,
 Compared with that divine delight which glowed, 95
 As to her smiling face I then inclined.
 And the new power that this her look bestowed
 Tore me away from Leda's pleasant nest,
 And bore me to the swiftest heaven's abode.
 Its parts, most full of life and loftiest, 100
 Are all so uniform, I fail to tell
 Where Beatrice chose that I should rest ;
 But she, to whom my wish was visible,
 Began, with smile that of such gladness told
 That God's own joy seemed in her face to dwell : 105
 "The nature of that motion which doth hold
 The centre still, while all the rest moves round,
 Hence, as from starting-point, hath ever rolled ;
 And in this Heaven no other Where is found
 But the one Mind of God, wherein doth glow 110
 The Love that turns, the Power that doth abound.
 Around it Love and Light encircling flow,
 As it around the rest, and this bright sphere
 He only knows Who it encircleth so.
 Its motion hath no measure for its year 115
 In others, but from this the others start,
 As ten by half and fifth is measured clear.

⁹¹ Preparatory to the new ascent there is a revelation of the beauty of Beatrice as surpassing all that could be seen in human flesh or revealed by painter's art. God Himself rejoices in her smile. A glance at that beauty carries the seer from the nest of Leda, i.e., the constellation of Gemini, and he is conscious that he has reached the *Primum Mobile* (*Conv.* ii. 4), revolving with inconceivable rapidity. Conceptions of space derived from earth, sun, stars are there inapplicable. He cannot tell where he is. There is no other *where* than the mind of God (l. 109), which impels its motions and endows it with manifold powers, both of which it transmits to all the spheres which it encloses.

¹⁰⁶ There is little to commend the reading "*moto*" instead of "*mondo*." What is stated is that the earth, as the centre of the universe, is at rest, while all the other spheres revolve around it.

¹¹² The "circle" is that of the Empyrean, thought of as the dwelling-place of God. Its light and love move the *Primum Mobile*, God only knowing how. It is the source and standard of motion to all other spheres, but cannot be measured by their standards. The comparison in l. 117 seems indeed to suggest such a standard. Was the poet-astronomer baffled by the endeavour to express the ineffable, so that he fell unawares into the paradox of a self-contradiction?

And how in such a vessel Time apart
 Hath set its roots, its foliage in the rest,
 Will now be clearer to thy searching heart. 120
 O greed of gain, which mortals hast oppress
 Beneath thy weight, that no one hath the power
 To raise his eyes above thy billows' crest!
 The will in men may put forth fairest flower,
 But ever-dropping rain at last doth turn 125
 The true plums into wildlings hard and sour.
 In tender children only we discern
 Or innocence or faith; then each doth flee,
 Ere yet the down to clothe the cheeks doth learn.
 One keeps his fasts in prattling infancy, 130
 Then, with tongue loosed, will food devour apace,
 In any month, of any quality.
 Another, while he prattles, has the grace
 To hear and love his mother; speech being clear,
 He fain would see her in her burial-place. 135
 So black becomes the skin, that did appear
 At first so white to see, in that fair child
 Of him who quits the eve and morn doth bear.
 Thou, that thou wander not in wonder wild,
 Reflect that earth has none to guide as king, 140
 And so the race of man strays, all beguiled.
 But ere that January pass to spring,
 Through that small hundredth men neglect below,
 These higher spheres shall with loud bellowings ring;

118 Time was the measure of motion, and the roots of time are found, not as convenience has led men to find them, in the movements of the sun and moon, but in that of the *Primum Mobile*. Time ends there, as space also ends.

121 It is almost a relief from these transcendental speculations to pass to an ethical, even a homiletic, thought.

124 The words are as an echo of *Rom.* vii. 18, *Isai.* v. 1-4. The continual rain is the ever-renewed prompting of the lower, selfish nature. In children (Dante's dogmatic theory would, I conceive, warrant his saying what he does even of unbaptized children) there may be some trace of faith and innocence, but they vanish as childhood vanishes. *Comp. Mon.* i. 11-13.

129 The examples of corruption are found in the two regions of duties which we have learnt to call positive and moral. The boy fasts on Wednesdays and Fridays; the man eats flesh all through Lent. The boy keeps the fifth commandment; the man wishes his mother in the grave.

136 The "white skin" is commonly expounded of human nature, thought of, as in *C.* xxii. 116, as the daughter of the sun. So in *Mon.* i. 11 man is described as "*filius celi*" (*Par.* xxii. 116). The interpretation which sees in the whole passage a comparison of man's nature to the moon as the sun's daughter is not, I think, tenable.

140 The complaint reminds us of the *Monarchia* (*passim*), of *Conv.* iv. 9; *Purg.* vi. 92. There was no one to govern the Church, for John XXII. (or Boniface VIII. if we take the ideal date) was not a true Pope; no one to govern the Empire, for Albert never entered Italy (*Purg.* vi. 97), and Lewis of Bavaria, Henry VII.'s successor, was following his example.

142 The astronomer, in a passage strikingly parallel with Roger Bacon (*Op. Tert.* c. 54),

The tempest fierce, that seemed to move so slow, 145
 Shall whirl the poops where now the prows we see,
 So that the fleet shall on its right course go,
 And, following on the flower, the true fruit be."

CANTO XXVIII.

The Central Sun—The Hierarchy of Angels in concentric Circles.

WHEN, as against man's life of miseries,
 The truth had been unfolded to mine eye
 By her who doth my mind imparadise,
 As one who in a mirror doth espy
 The flame of candle that behind him burns, 5
 Ere he has it in sight or phantasy,
 And then, to see if true the mirror, turns,
 And sees that it is with the image wed,
 As music that to fit the metre learns,
 So in my mind what then I did is read, 10
 As on those beauteous eyes I fixed my gaze,
 Whence Love made cords by which my soul was led.

notes the defects of the Julian Calendar. The annual error of the hundredth part of a day had thrown the Calendar out of gear by ten days. Gregory XII. reformed it in 1582, and the change was adopted in England in 1752. Here the prophecy looks to a more remote future than was Dante's wont, the limit which he sets extending, if we take his words literally, to well-nigh three thousand years.

¹⁴⁵ When the fleet is sailing in a wrong direction, the pilots must reverse their course to bring them to the haven where they would be. All systems of government that Dante saw required that change. Then there should be no more the spectacle of promise without performance, flowers without fruit.

³ The word "imparadise" is noticeable as having been reproduced by Milton (*P. L.* iv. 506).

⁵ The comparison within comparison suggests the studies both in optics and music in which Dante delighted. He recognises an identity of law between the correspondence of the reflection to the flame and of music to metre. We are reminded of Bacon's question of "Is the delight of the quavering upon a stop in music the same with the playing of the light upon the water?" (*Adv. bk. i. Works*, i. p. 45, ed. 1753). Dante sets forth his own experience as he gazed on the eyes of Beatrice, and saw that they mirrored the new Heaven (*volume*, as in *C. xxiii. 112*), *sc.* the Empyrean. He sees at once a point infinitely small and infinitely bright, the symbolic manifestation of the Divine Nature, and round it, beginning at a distance like that which parts the moon from its halo, are nine concentric circles of fire, revolving, the nearest with a motion as swift as that of the *Primum Mobile*, the others with a speed and a brightness diminishing as their distance from the centre increased. These, as we learn from *ll. 98-125*, answer to the nine orders of the hierarchy of Heaven. The order is, it will be noted, the inverse of that of the actual *cosmos* as represented in the Ptolemaic astronomy. There the smallest sphere, that of the moon, nearest the earth, was the slowest in its motion; here that which is nearest to the First Cause as its centre is the swiftest. The poet's mind seeks to know the meaning of the contrast. Was not this which he looked on the "idea" in the Platonic sense, the archetype of the visible creation? Why was the copy so unlike the pattern? Dante may have had Hugh of St. Victor (*Cal. Hier. c. 15*) in his thoughts.

And as I turned me, and mine eyes did raise
 To that which meets them in the circling sphere,
 Whene'er we have clear vision of its ways, 15
 I saw a point so radiant appear,
 So keenly bright, it needs must be the eye
 Should shrink and close before its brightness clear.
 The smallest star which from the earth we spy
 A moon would seem, with it set side by side, 20
 As star may be compared with star on high.
 At such a distance as a halo wide
 Doth compass round the light that paints its hue,
 When mist that forms it is least rarefied,
 Thus round the point a circle came in view 25
 Of fire, so swift that it would leave behind
 The sphere that swiftest doth its course pursue.
 And this within a second was confined,
 That by a third, that by a fourth again,
 That by a fifth, round which a sixth did wind. 30
 Then came a seventh, so wide in its domain
 That Juno's herald, though full span it won,
 Would fail its wide-spread circuit to contain ;
 So too the eighth and ninth, and each did run
 More slowly round as it was far away, 35
 As measured by its number, from the One.
 And that had flame the clearest in its ray
 Which was least distant from the pure spark's light,
 Because, I deem, more in its Truth it lay.
 My Lady, who beheld my doubting plight, 40
 Yearning to know, said : " From that point depends
 All Heaven, yea, and Nature, depth and height.
 That circle see which nearest to it bends,
 And know its motion is thus hurried on
 By the hot love which spur to impulse lends." 45

²² The messenger of Juno is, of course, Iris, the rainbow (*Æn.* iv. 693; *Met.* i. 270, xi. 585). The largest rainbow, if one could imagine it completing its circle, would be small as compared with the seventh circle, and the eighth and ninth were, of course, wider still. For another rainbow comparison see *Purg.* xxi. 50.

²⁹ Dante guesses that the brightness of the innermost circle arises from its sharing more than others in the truth of the Divine Nature, and Beatrice confirms his conjecture by the statement that he is looking on the centre from which all Heaven and Nature depend. The words are an actual quotation from *Arist.* *Met.* ii. 7.

⁴³ In the physical *cosmos* the *Primum Mobile* moves with a marvellous velocity through its intense desire to unite itself with the calm motionless *Empyrean*, which is the dwelling-

And I to her: "If our world did but run
 With order, as I see these wheels go round,
 I were content with knowledge I have won;
 But in the world of sense we still have found
 The circles tending more to grow divine, 50
 The farther they recede from central ground.
 Wherefore, to satisfy this wish of mine
 In this shrine wondrous and angelical,
 Which hath but light and love for boundary line,
 I needs must hear how thus it doth befall, 55
 The copy and the pattern differ so;
 For to myself 'tis fruitless wonder all."
 "If thine own fingers scanty skill shall show
 Such knot to loose, it should not wonder wake,
 So hard for want of trying doth it grow." 60
 Thus far my Lady; then she said: "Now take
 That which I tell, if thou would'st have thy will,
 And thereupon thy wits more subtle make.
 The spheres corporeal more or less space fill,
 According to the more or less of might 65
 Which throughout every portion worketh still.
 A greater bliss doth greater good requite,
 And greater bliss a greater frame must show,
 If all its parts attain their fullest height.
 So this which sweepeth all the spheres below, 70
 As it moves onward, answers to the sphere
 Which, loving most, most fully too doth know.

place of God (*Conv.* ii. 4). In the spiritual *cosmos* love is also, in like manner, the cause of the rapid motion of the innermost circle of the Seraphim, who excel in love and are nearest to the Divine Presence.

⁵⁹ So in C. xxvii. 112. The Love and Light of the Empyrean encompass the *Primum Mobile*. Here God, who is Light and Love, is the only limit of the Heaven, which is, in the strictest sense of the words, an angelic Temple.

⁶⁰ The problem has been already stated in the note on l. 9. There is apparently a half-conscious pride in the subtlety that can state such a problem, which seems at first insoluble, because none have tried to solve it. The words contain, if I mistake not, the key to much that seems to us most wonderful in the supersubtle speculation of Aquinas or Dionysius.

⁶⁴ The solution is given almost as a revelation of the higher wisdom. The relation between the spiritual and the material worlds is that of an inverted order. In the latter, greater perfection requires greater expansion, and so the *Primum Mobile* corresponds to the circle of the Seraphim who love God best and know Him most perfectly. See note on l. 43. That key being given, the problem is practically solved, and the same correspondence is to be traced in the remaining circles. The questioner has to look to the virtue, the distinguishing character, of each circle of the angelic hierarchy. The English reader may be referred once more to Fr. Bacon (*Adv. B. l., Works*, vol. i. p. 19, ed. 1753) for an interesting parallelism to Dante's view.

Wherefore, if thou survey with vision clear
 The virtue, not the semblance that we see,
 Of these substantial forms which round appear, 75
 Thou'lt see a wondrous correspondency
 Of more with greater, less with smaller here,
 And every heaven with its Mind agree."
 As clear and calm the ærial hemisphere
 Shineth, when Boreas from that cheek doth blow 80
 Whence with a gentler force his breezes veer,
 So that it clears, and bids the cloud-rack go
 Which erst obscured it, and the sky smiles bright
 With all the beauties that its regions show,
 So was I then, when me to help aright 85
 My Lady thus took thought with her clear speech,
 And Truth, like star in heaven, was full in sight.
 And when those words of hers their goal did reach,
 As molten iron sparkleth all around,
 So sparkled then those circles all and each ; 90
 And every spark did more and more abound
 In fiery light, and so their number grew
 Beyond the "chess-board's doubling" problem's bound.

⁸¹ The wind that clears the sky from mists is the north-east, as less stormy than that which blows from the north-west; the Thracian breezes, which are the companions of spring of Hor. *Od.* i. 25, 11, iv. 12, 2; Virg. *Æn.* xii. 365. So, with Dante, were the mists of doubt driven away by the truth thus revealed to him. Comp. Boeth. i. 2.

⁸² The angelic orders rejoice in the truth, and show their joy by a new brightness, shown by countless sparkles.

⁸³ The doubling of the chess, *sc.* the raising it to the 63rd power, rises out of the story that the inventor of the game asked for his reward one grain of wheat for the first square of the chess-board, two for the second, and so on; the result being 18,446,744,073,709,551,615 (*Scart.*) The problem, like the game itself, is said to have come from India, but when or how the game passed into Europe there is no sufficient evidence to say. A treatise, *Solatium Ludi Scacchorum*, is said to have been written by Jacopo Daccisoletto before 1200, and Hyde (*Historia Scacchiludii*, 1694) quotes some Saxon verses in which it is named, which would imply that it was known at an earlier date than that of the first Crusade. It appears in Chaucer, *Book of the Duchess*, where we have the description of a game at chess between Man and Fortune, in which the former is checkmated, and in the *Romanse of King Alisaunder*, l. 2006 (after A.D. 1300). Some light is thrown on the history of the game in Italy by the fact that in A.D. 1267 a Saracen chess-player came to Florence, who, in the Palace of the People and in the presence of Guido Novello, carried on three games simultaneously with the best players of the city, looking only at one; won two of these, and got a drawn game in the third (*Malisp.* c. 189). In 1312 Richard of Camino was assassinated as he was playing at chess (C. ix. 50 *ss.*) One wonders (1) whether Dante played chess as well as worked the sum, and (2) whether he got at his result with Roman or Arabic numerals, by simple multiplication and addition, or by the algebraic formula of geometrical progres-

sion $S = a \frac{r^n - 1}{r - 1}$. The Arabic numerals and the abbreviated methods of Algebra had been introduced into Europe by Leonardo Bonacci of Pisa in his *Liber Abaci*, circ. 1202, and both Gerbert (Pope Sylvester II.) and Robert Grossetête are credited with some knowledge of the latter. They occur in a MS. in C. C. Cambridge of 1330, are named in Chaucer's *Prose* in 1375 as still "new." Merchants' accounts were kept in Roman numerals till the middle of the 16th century (Peacock in *Encyc. Metrop.* art. *Arithmetic*). The result of the

And then from choir to choir Hosannas flew
 To that fixed Point which keepeth every one, 95
 And will keep ever, in its *Ubi* true;
 And she, who saw what thoughts of doubt had won
 Power o'er my mind, said: "These, the circles prime,
 The Seraphim and Cherubim have shown.
 As if constrained, they speed in such quick time 100
 To be as like the Point as they may be,
 And their power varies with their sight sublime.
 Those other Loves, which moving round we see,
 Are known as Thrones of God's face manifest,
 And so they close the first trine company. 105
 And thou should'st know that all are so far blest
 As doth their vision in the abyss descend
 Of Truth, wherein each intellect finds rest.
 Hence may be seen how bliss attains its end,
 Founded on that one single power of sight, 110
 And not on love, which after doth attend.
 And of that power to see, the standard right
 Is merit, child of God's grace and good-will;
 Thus they advance from step to step of height.

sum might well seem the symbol of the innumerable company of the angels. The fact that all the statues of the west front of Wells Cathedral north of the west door are marked with Arabic numerals, while those on the south are marked with Roman, may indicate either the first introduction of the former or the contemporaneous use of the two (*Trans. of Som. Arch. Soc.* xix. p. 42).

⁹⁴ And from all that company there comes the loud Hosanna. That centre, the Light and Love which God is, keeps them each in his rank. So they have been since their creation; so they shall be to eternity.

⁹⁵ The classification is mainly based upon the treatise *De Celesti Hierarchia*, which bears the name of Dionysius the Areopagite. There are three main orders, each with three sub-sections. Aquinas (*Summ.* i. 108, 1-8) follows Dionysius as Dante does here. A somewhat different grouping is given by Gregory the Great (*Hom. in Evang.* 34), and again by Dante himself in *Conv.* ii. 6. It is not, I think, worth while to tabulate the different arrangements. Comp. *D. C. A.* art. *Angels*; *D. C. B.* art. *Angels* and *Dionysius the Areopagite*; and Westcott's art. on *Dionysius* in *Cont. Rev.* vol. v. The question whether St. Paul's enumeration in *Rom.* viii. 38, *Eph.* i. 21, *Col.* i. 16, ii. 15, implies the classification which was afterwards developed from it, belongs to Biblical exegesis rather than to that of Dante.

⁹⁶ The Seraphim and Cherubim, differing in that the former excel in love and the other in knowledge, are alike in this, that each desires to be conformed to the likeness of what it knows and loves.

¹⁰⁴ The Thrones are those who are mirrors of the Divine Mind in its fulness (*C.* ix. 61), and are therefore the spirits through whom it executes its judgments, on which its glory rests. The bliss of each of the three ranks is perfect in kind, though it may differ in its degree.

¹¹⁰ The definition is thoroughly Aristotelian. Perfect happiness (*eudaimonia*) is a contemplative energy. The subtlety of the scholastic mind had raised the question whether this was a sufficient account of the blessedness of the angelic spirits, and some, e.g. Scotus, placed that blessedness in the fruition of the love of God. Dante, following Aquinas (*Summ.* i. 2. 3, 1-8; iii. *Suppl.* 92, 1-3), treats the love of God as a sequence and supplement of the knowledge.

¹¹² The law that the vision of God varies in its clearness according to the merits of those who contemplate it is a general one, and holds good of the spirits of just men made perfect as well as of the angels.

The other Triad, which doth burgeon still 115
 In this eternal spring, which no blast drear
 Despoils when Aries comes with night-frost chill,
 For ever warbles forth Hosanna clear,
 With triple songs that echo in the three
 Great ranks of joy where they intrined appear. 120
 Three hosts divine are in this hierarchy—
 Dominions first, then those as Virtues known,
 Then Powers, that fill the third place in degree.
 Then in the twain whose dance is last but one,
 Archangels, Principalities, wheel round, 125
 And sports of Angels have the last place won.
 These orders all with upward gaze are found,
 And downward so prevail that each doth draw,
 And each is drawn, to God in love profound.
 And Dionysius with such yearning awe 130
 These orders gave himself to contemplate,
 That he, as I, assigned their names and law ;
 But Gregory from him did separate ;
 And so when he in Heaven had oped his eyes,
 He smiled at that his notion of our state. 135
 And let it not, I pray, thy mind surprise
 That mortal man should utter truth so deep ;
 For he who saw it taught in wondrous wise
 Full many a truth which these our circles keep.”

¹¹⁵ The second triplet includes the Dominations, Virtues, and Powers. They rejoice in an eternal spring, which is not changed, as the earthly spring changes, with the order of the seasons. When Aries is seen by night, *i.e.*, after the autumnal equinox, no winter passes over its Hosanna chant, as on earth over the green fields. The verb which Dante uses, *sverna*, literally “gets out of winter,” “unwinters” (if we may coin the word), had come to be used of the song of birds in spring-time.

¹²¹ The term *Dee*, literally goddesses, is used, like “gods” in *Pr.* lxxxii. 6 and *John* x. 35, for those who are, in the measure of their capacity, sharers in the Divine Nature.

¹²⁴ The Principalities and Archangels are, as it were, the subalterns of the army of the Lord of Sabaoth, the rank and file of which is made up of angels.

¹²⁹ Speculative critics (*e.g.*, Tagliacucchi, a mathematician of Turin) have found in this line an anticipation of Newton’s theory of universal attraction. They forget that Dante is describing the spiritual, not the material, universe.

¹³⁰ The difference between Gregory and Dionysius was that the former inverted the relative positions of the Principalities and Virtues, putting Powers in the first class, Principalities in the second, Thrones in the third. So Dante had himself done (*Conv.* ii. 6) at a time when he cared less for the authority of Aquinas than he did when he wrote the *Paradise*. He smiles, as it were, like Gregory, at his former error.

¹³² The words of *2 Cor.* xii. 4 were supposed to include a complete vision of the heavenly hosts, which St. Paul, in his turn, was believed to have revealed to the Areopagite.

CANTO XXIX.

*Beatrice on the Creation and Fall of Angels, and on the Faults and Follies
of Preachers.*

WHEN both the children of Latona old,
 In shelter of the Ram and of the Scales,
 The zone of the horizon doth enfold,
 As is the time when from those balanced scales
 They part, both one and other, from their place, 5
 Till, changing hemisphere, the balance fails,
 So long, with look which winning smile did grace,
 Was Beatrice silent, looking still
 Upon the Point which I was weak to face.
 Then she began: "I speak, nor ask thy will 10
 What thou would'st know, for I have seen it there
 Wherein each *ubi, quando*, centres still.
 Not that He sought a greater good to share—
 That might not be—but that His glory great
 Might, as it shines, the name 'I AM' declare, 15
 In His eternity, His timeless state,
 Beyond all grasp of thought, as seemed Him right,
 The Eternal Love in new loves did dilate.
 Not that He lay before in sleep of night,
 For no Before or After did precede 20
 God's moving on the waters in His might.
 Matter and form together did proceed,
 In purest state, to act which could not err,
 As three-stringed bow sends forth a triple reed.

¹⁻⁶ After Dante's fashion, the simple fact that Beatrice was silent for an instant, as long as it takes for sun or moon to rise above or sink below the horizon, is described in a somewhat complicated fashion. The sun and moon are represented at the moment of the equinox, the former in Aries, the latter in Libra.

⁹ Beatrice sees the unspoken thoughts of Dante in the mirror of the Divine Mind, which is the ground of all space and time. Those thoughts are questions such as Aquinas had asked and answered (*Summ.* i. 60-62) as to the nature, creation, and function of angels.

¹² The first of the questions was one which had largely occupied the minds of the schoolmen. What motive led the Divine Mind to break, as it were, the silence of eternity by the act of creation? He was bound by no chain of necessity; He could not add to His own perfection. It was, therefore, that He might manifest His glory, the glory of the I AM, to others. So Aquinas (*c. Gen.* ii. 46). In eternity, outside the conditions of time and space, the Eternal Love was pleased to reveal Himself in new loves. It was not as if he had been inactive before creation, for in eternity there is no before or after. So Aquinas (*Summ.* i. 10, 1) and Augustine (*Conf.* xi. 13). Those distinctions of time and space began when the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters (*Gen.* i. 2), for time is the measure of motion.

²⁴ The image is taken from the crossbows of ancient warfare, which discharged three

And as in amber, glass, or crystal clear 25
 So shines a ray, that from its first descent,
 Till all is bright, no interval is there,
 Thus from its Lord the tri-formed effluence sent
 Flashed into being once, and once for all,
 Nor did, as it began, degrees present. 30
 Order and form as concreate did fall
 With substances, and those were as the crown
 Which purest act did into being call.
 Mere potency is seated lowest down,
 And potency and act unite midway, 35
 And how to disunite is known to none.
 Angels were made by God, did Jerome say,
 Long tract of ages ere in order next
 The other world was started on its way ;
 But this is writ in many a sacred text 40
 Of writers whom the Holy Ghost did teach ;
 If there thou seek, thou wilt not be perplex'd.
 And Reason too the same belief doth reach,
 Which scarce could suffer that the powers that move
 Should lack completeness that belongs to each. 45
 Now know'st thou when and where these forms of love
 Were made, and how ; so thus are quenched well
 In thy desire three fires that burnt to prove.

arrows at once. Here the three arrows are (1) pure matter, the groundwork of the visible creation ; (2) pure form or spirit, the angelic orders ; (3) the ordered *cosmos*, and specially man, as uniting both the elements ? And this creation was instantaneous. The whole universe flashed, as it were, into existence instantaneously, as a ray passes through crystal. The imagery reminds us, like C. ii. 97-105, of the student of experimental optics.

³¹ In that creation the angels, as pure form, *i.e.* spirit, held the highest place (*Purg.* xi. 3). Pure matter or potency, as capable of higher possibilities of Nature, held the lowest. The visible cosmos, animate and inanimate, held the intermediate place.

³⁷ Dante, as a disciple of Aquinas, who asserts the simultaneousness of the creation of the whole universe, including the angels (*Summ.* i. 61, 3), places his authority above that of St. Jerome, who had incidentally taught (in a note on *Tit.* i. 2) that the latter had been created ages before the creation of the material universe. Comp. Hugh of St. Victor, *Summ. Sent.* ii. 1.

⁴⁰ The texts which Dante may have had in his mind are *Gen.* i. 1 (so *Aguin. l. c.*) ; *Eccles.* xviii. 1 ; *Ps.* civ. 4, 5. Line 41 implies the mediæval theory of inspiration as equivalent to dictation. The writers of Scripture were but the penmen of the Spirit.

⁴⁸ An *a priori* argument is added to that from Scripture. The angels were, as in *Conv.* ii. 5, *Caus.* xiv. 1, the movers of the spheres. It was not easy to conceive of their having existed without the function which was the final cause of their existence, and the absence of which therefore involved imperfection.

⁴⁹ The word "elect" is used instead of "created" because the faithful angels—faithful to God's election—are spoken of. The rebellious angels also had been made with a like election ; but they cast it away, as Christians cast away the electing grace which makes them children of God (*Ep.* i. 4 ; *1 Pet.* i. 10).

Nor could'st thou numbers up to twenty tell
 So soon as part of that angelic host 50
 Brought on your lower world disturbance fell.
 The other part remained, and took their post
 With wondrous joy, as thou hast here beheld,
 And never have their circling motion lost.
 Through the accursèd pride were they expelled 55
 Of him whom thou hast looked upon below,
 By all the weight of all the world fast held.
 Those whom thou see'st here did their meekness show,
 Acknowledging the Goodness that had made
 Them quick and prompt such mysteries to know ; 60
 And hence their powers of vision were displayed,
 By grace illumined and by merit too,
 So that their will in full resolve is stayed.
 I would not have thee doubt, but hold as true,
 That in receiving grace comes merit high, 65
 E'en as affection opes in measure due.
 Now, looking round on this Consistory,
 Thou may'st enough contemplate, if my speech
 Be grasped, without a further commentary.
 But since on earth the schools a doctrine teach 70
 That the angelic nature, in its span,
 To thought, and will, and memory doth reach,

⁴⁹ So far three of the questions had been answered. There remained that which asked how long the rebel angels remained faithful to their Maker. Dante again follows Aquinas (*Summ.* i. 63, 6) in maintaining that it was all but instantaneous. To count from one to twenty gave an ample margin for Lucifer's contemplation of his own perfections (*Purg.* xii. 25), for his aspiring to be equal with God (*Isai.* xiv. 12, 13), for his leading innumerable other angels into rebellion. Milton seems to have demanded more time for his episode of the war in Heaven (*P. L.* bk. v. 1.) The fall of the angels (as in *H.* xxxiv. 121-126) disturbed the matter which underlies the elements of the *cosmos*.

⁵⁰ The "art" which the faithful angels learnt was that of contemplating, praising, adoring God as the centre of their being.

⁵¹ *Comp. H.* xxxiv. 34.

⁵² The proud self-exalting angels fell to extremest degradation. Those that were more modest owned that they had nothing they had not received, and therefore received more illuminating grace, and then, on the theory of a "grace of condignity or congruity" (*Art.* xiii.), the gift of perseverance, so that they could no longer fall from their high estate. Grace, therefore, does not exclude merit; nay, rather, there is a merit in the very act of accepting it. So the angels had, in scholastic language, merited their blessedness (*Aquin. Summ.* i. 62, 84-88).

⁵³ The word "consistory" had been used in *Purg.* ix. 24 of the deities of Olympus. Here it is applied to the "general assembly" of the saints and angels (*Heb.* xii. 23). *Comp.* the use of "*cloister*" in *Purg.* xv. 57, xxvi. 128.

⁵⁴ The bold self-confidence which had led Dante to challenge comparison with Ovid and Lucan (*H.* xxv. 94-99), almost to compete with *Ezekiel* and *St. John* in apocalyptic imagery (*Purg.* xxix., xxxii.), is with him still. In one point the scholar can correct the master, and

More will I speak, that thou may'st clearly scan
 The truth below confused through want of skill,
 In teachings thus ambiguous in their plan. 75
 These substances, since joy their life did fill
 From God's own face, their glance have ne'er let stray
 From Him with whom is nothing hidden still ;
 Hence is their vision never drawn away
 By a new object, nor need care to take 80
 Facts to recall, because they do not stay ;
 So that below men dream, although awake,
 Believing, not believing, in their speech :
 This last it is more guilt and shame doth make.
 Not by one path do ye your wisdom teach, 85
 As ye philosophise ; so leads astray
 The love of show and fancy swaying each.
 Yet e'en on this less weight of scorn we lay,
 Here in this Heaven, than when the Sacred Book
 Is thrust aside or made false part to play. 90

he even ventures to criticise Aquinas. That thinker had taught that angels think and remember as men do (*Summ.* i. 54, 55). Not so is the poet's judgment. They have no need, and therefore no power, of memory ; for they see all things in the Divine Mind, are mirrors of that Mind, and in it there is no past, and therefore no memory. No new object can interrupt their vision ; and there being no interruption of an ever-present perception, there can be no memory, which implies that interruption. The refining subtlety of the scholastic mind may almost be said to culminate in this speculative theory.

⁸³ The passage finds a parallel in C. xiii. 126. In this matter of the memory of the angels he passes judgment on two classes of waking dreamers. Some believe in their own speculations, and have no heretical animus. Some maintain theories which they do not believe, for the sake of startling men and winning praise by paradoxes ; and this, as of the very essence of heresy, brings more guilt. We have no adequate data for deciding what teachers Dante had in view under either category. The context would seem to suggest that he places Albert of Cologne, who also attributed memory to angels, and Aquinas in the former group. I surmise that some theological disputants whom he had encountered at Verona, or, it may be, Paris, came under the heavier condemnation.

⁸⁵ The condemnation of error is carried farther. Men were following each his own self-chosen path, whereas there was but one way that led to the one Truth. What a later age learnt to call Latitudinarianism, the belief that all the wanderings of error will at last converge to truth, found no favour in Dante's eyes. What he saw in such wanderings was the preference of counterfeits to reality ; above all, an absorbing egotism. Some of us are perhaps tempted to ask whether the judge was altogether free from the failing which he thus condemns ?

⁸⁶ Errors in speculative philosophy were, however, less evil than the neglect or perversion of Scripture, and these, as he listened to preachers in Verona or Ravenna, seemed to him to swarm on every side. They dealt with it as with any other book, forgetting that it had been bought with the blood of the Saints, and that lowliness in reading it was the condition of illumination. It grieved his soul to see how it was wrested, what idle questions men wrangled over as they expounded it. Some explained the darkness at the Crucifixion as an eclipse, and then, contrary to the axiom, *miracula non sunt multiplicanda præter necessitatem*, assumed that the full moon became a new moon for those three hours. That, of course, the astronomer-poet could not stand. Others maintained that the light of the sun was not only intercepted "over all the land" of Palestine, but absolutely failed, so that there was darkness in Spain and India, two ideal horizons of the land hemisphere, as well as in Judæa. Apparently Dante thought this an irrational extension of the supernatural. His own position seems to have been that of one who accepts the fact on the authority of Scripture, and con-

They think not there how much of blood it took
 To sow it in the world, and what high praise
 Is his who humbly turns on it to look.
 For outward show each one his wit displays,
 His own inventions form the preacher's theme, 95
 And all the Gospel story silent stays.
 This saith the moon did intercept the gleam
 Of sunlight at the Christ's death-agony,
 So that to earth its radiance could not stream ;
 This, that the light itself was quenched on high, 100
 And so alike in India and in Spain,
 As with the Jews, such darkness met the eye.
 Nor doth our Florence such a crowd contain
 Of Bindi, Lapi, as are tales like these,
 Which through the year make pulpits ring again, 105
 So that the lambs, in ignorance, at ease,
 Turn from the pasture fed with wind alone,
 Yet find in ignorance no excusing pleas.
 Christ said not to His primal flock, 'Go on,
 And to the world proclaim an idle tale,' 110
 But gave to them the Truth as corner-stone ;

fesses his ignorance as to the cause. I adopt the reading *ad altri* instead of "*e mente*," which finds favour with some critics (*Benv., Phil.*) Here also Dante differs from Aquinas (*Summ.* iii. 44), and from Jerome.

103 The two names, Lapo, short for Jacopo, Bindo, for Ildebrando, are given, like our Tom and Jack, as the commonest at Florence. Perhaps they were so common that they were avoided by the families whose names appear in history. Lapo Salterello is one instance of the former name, but I do not recollect meeting with a Bindo.

105 Like all other men who have their share of the prophetic element of character, Dante vexed his soul with the thought of the wasted opportunities of the pulpit. Profitless discussions about things beyond the limit of the knowable, idle jests, and tales that were "not convenient," made up a large portion of the preaching that he had heard in Italian cities. It would be a dreary and profitless task to collect instances of this abuse. Those who are acquainted with mediæval sermons will recognise the truth of the description. I content myself with quoting the words of another man of genius, probably Dante's teacher, on the preaching of his time, which he describes as containing "*nec sublimitas sermonis, nec sapientie magnitudo, sed infinita puerilis stultitia et vilificatio sermonum Dei.*" There was absolutely "*nulla utilitas*" in it. Of all the preachers he had heard, one only had reached at once his mind and his heart, and that was Berthold of Regensburg, of the Franciscan Order R. Bacon (*Op. Tert.* c. 75, *ad fin.*)

106 Were the lines in Milton's mind when he wrote (*Lyc.* 125), "The hungry sheep look up and are not fed," or was the thought derived by both from *Ezek.* xxxiv. 3, or was it in each case a self-originated parable?

108 The ignorance of the flock was not of the kind that could be pleaded as an excuse. They all had some knowledge of Christian truth, and the most elementary knowledge should have taught them a distaste for the rubbish which they heard from priests and friars.

109 We note in the Italian "*convento*" the recurrence of the idea as applied to Christ and his Apostles (*Purg.* xv. 57, xxvi. 128.) The preaching which He commended was quite other than that which Dante condemned. Then His preachers were champions of the truth, fighting with shield and lance in her defence (*Eph.* vi. 13-17).

And with such might it came from organs frail,
 That, in their warring for the Faith's clear light,
 As shield and spear the Gospel did avail.
 Now is our preaching done with jestings slight 115
 And mockings, and if men but laugh agape,
 The cowl puffs out, nor ask men if 'tis right;
 Yet such a bird doth nestle in their cape,
 That, if the crowd beheld it, they would know
 What pardons they rely on for escape. 120
 And thus such madness there on earth doth grow,
 That, without proof of any evidence,
 To each Indulgence eager crowds will flow.
 So grow Antonio's swine in corpulence,
 And others plenty who are worse than swine, 125
 Paying their way with false, unminted pence.
 But since we thus have wandered from our line,
 Now to the straight path turn at last thine eyes,
 That so brief way with shortened time combine.

¹¹⁵ Of yore men had preached that they might draw tears of repentance from those who heard them; now they were content to excite laughter, and the swelling hood became a symbol of the preacher's swollen vanity. If these listening crowds could only see the devil-bird (*H.* xxii. 96, xxxiv. 47) that was nesting in the peak of that hood, they would take a truer measure of the indulgences which the preacher offered them. *Vill.* (xii. 4) notices, among the French fashions introduced into Florence in 1342, the lengthening of the *becchiette* or peak of the hood till it touched the ground. He is speaking, however, of lay costume, not of that of the friars. For once, in this protest against indulgences (then a comparatively recent innovation, introduced by Alexander III., 1159-1180, but first brought into prominence by the Jubilee of Boniface VIII., 1300), Dante anticipates the language of Luther.

¹²⁴ St. Antony, the hermit-saint of Egypt (A.D. 251-356), was commonly represented (as in the pictures of the elder Teniers and other painters) with a pig at his feet, as the symbol of the unclean spirit that had tempted him; and so St. Antony's pig had become proverbial. There is, if I mistake not, a special significance in Dante's use of the phrase. Towards the close of the eleventh century France was ravaged by an epidemic which was known as the *Morbus Sacer*, probably a form of erysipelas. The help of St. Antony was, for some reason, involved as a healer, and the disease came to be popularly known as St. Antony's fire. A young noble, Gaston of Dauphiné (the Saint's body was believed to be interred in the church of Motte St. Didier, in that province), who had recovered from it, founded a lay brotherhood of St. Antony (1095) for ministering to the sick. Innocent III. conceded to the brotherhood the privilege of building a church in 1208; Honorius III. raised them to the position of a monastic order; finally, Boniface VIII. placed them, with new privileges, under the Augustinian rule (Hagenbach, in *Herzog. Real. Encycl.* i. 417). The Order became popular in France and Italy, and it was a common act of popular devotion to offer swine to them, which were known as St. Antony's pigs, and the term, by a natural extension, was applied to all swine kept by monks. There is no evidence that I know of that the Order had a house in Florence, but Sacchetti (*Nov.* cx.) bears testimony to the wide use of the name there. The fact that Boniface VIII. had patronised the Order was enough, I conceive, even if there had not been sufficient reason for it on other grounds, to lead Dante to hold up its members to opprobrium as an instance of monastic degradation. The pigs, *i.e.*, the monks of St. Antony, grew fat by trading on the superstition of the crowd; concubines and others shared their ill-gotten gains, and they paid for all with indulgences which were of no value, perhaps as issued without adequate authority, perhaps as applied without the implied condition of repentance. Those coins had not come from the mint of Christ and His Church.

¹²⁷ From this digression, to which Dante had been led probably by his indignation at some specially bad sermon, he returns to the problems connected with the nature of angels. He had already in the squaring of the chess-board (*C.* xxviii. 93) indicated his

This order far and wide so multiplies 180
 From rank to rank, that never speech might tell,
 Nor thought of man unto their number rise.
 And if thou dost in Daniel's vision spell,
 Thou'lt see that, in his thousands manifold,
 No number definite is visible. 185
 The primal Light, whose rays the whole enfold,
 In modes as many is received by each
 As are the splendours which thereon lay hold.
 Hence, as the affection follows—so we teach—
 Close on the thought, the sweetness of their love 140
 Is hot or tepid, varying thus in each.
 So see'st thou of the Power eterne above
 The breadth and height, reflected o'er and o'er
 In mirrors where its broken light doth rove,
 One in itself remaining as before." 145

CANTO XXX.

*The Tenth Heaven—The Empyrean—Beatrice in Glory—The River of Light—
The Flowers and the Sparks of Paradise—The Eternal Rose—Henry
of Luxemburg.*

Six thousand miles away perchance doth lie
 A point where noon glows, and this world doth throw
 Its shadow all but horizontally,

estimate of their number; now he refers to the "ten thousand times ten thousand" of *Dan.* vii. 10. The "determinate number" is probably connected with an exposition of *Luke* xv. 4 given by St. Ambrose and Theophylact. The lost sheep were the human race; the ninety-and-nine were the unfallen angels. Their number was therefore that multiple of the whole family of man in all ages (Trench, *Parables*, p. 364). With this was connected the thought that the "number of the elect" was identical with that of the rebel angels. Every angel, according to his rank and order, reflects and perceives the Divine Light and Love, which varies according to the clearness of his vision, the Seraphim ranking highest, as in *C.* xxviii. 99.

¹ The simple fact of sunrise is described, after Dante's manner (*Purg.* i. 19, ix. 1-9, xix. 1-6), in a somewhat complicated fashion. The circumference of the earth was reckoned by him at about 20,400 miles (*Conv.* iii. 5, 8); therefore, when it is noon (the sixth hour), 6000 miles from us, with us it is the first hour of morning, when the stars begin to disappear, and the shadow of the earth is cast nearly on the plane on which we stand, the sun being on the horizon. Even so did the nine orders of the angels vanish from the poet's eyes. He turns to Beatrice, and she is fairer and more glorious than ever. Only her Creator can comprehend all her glory; and this is because they have passed into the Empyrean Heaven, beyond the *Primum Mobile*, the "calm and pacific sphere which is the abode of God and of the saints" (*Conv.* ii. 4).

When the high vault of Heaven to us below
 So deep becomes, that here and there a star 5
 Hides from our ken, in this our depth, its glow;
 And as the sun's fair handmaid comes from far
 Advancing, Heaven is closed to mortal eye,
 Orb after orb, e'en those that brightest are.
 Not otherwise did that great Triumph high, 10
 That plays around the point for me too bright,
 Which, all-enclosing, seems enclosed to lie,
 Little by little now withdraw its light;
 Whence I to turn to Beatrice was led
 Both by my love and loss of that great sight. 15
 If all that I of her till now have said
 Were brought together in one word of praise,
 For what came then 'twere all too feebly sped.
 The beauty that I saw surpassed all ways,
 Not of our ken alone, but well I trow, 20
 Its Maker only can that joy appraise.
 At such a pass my failure is, I know,
 Far worse than poets, wrestling with their theme,
 Tragic or comic, e'er are wont to show.
 For as our sight is dazed by sunlight beam, 25
 So e'en to recollect that smile of grace
 Makes all my mind bewildered as in dream.
 From the first day I looked upon her face,
 In this our life, to this my vision clear,
 In line unbroken I my song might trace; 30
 But now perforce I may not persevere,
 To follow all her beauty with my song,
 E'en as each artist knows his limit near.

²² The words are general. No poet was ever so overpowered by the greatness of his theme as Dante now felt himself; but the "comic" probably refers to the title he had given his poem, and the "tragic" to Virgil (*H.* xvi. 128, xx. 113, xxi. 2).

²⁵ The comparison appears also in *V. N.* c. 42; *Canz.* xii. 16, 62; *Conv.* iii. 8. Here it is intensified by the statement that it is not the actual glory, but only the bare memory of it which thus overpowers him.

²⁸ We are nearing the close of the poem, the close also of the poet's life, and he still falls back on that first May morning, of which he tells the tale in *V. N.* c. 2. All that he had felt from that day to the present hour he had sought, not altogether in vain, to tell. Now he renounced the attempt to describe it in words, as every artist must renounce the attempt to realise his highest ideal of perfection.

Such as I leave to some more worthy tongue
 Than speaketh through my trumpet, which doth lead 35
 To speedy close its arduous task and long,
 With mien and voice of one well skilled to speed
 In guidance she began: "Now far above,
 From widest orb we reach Heaven's light indeed—
 Light of the intellect replete with love, 40
 Love of true good replete with perfect bliss,
 Bliss that doth far above all sweetness prove.
 Here shalt thou see both armies, that and this,
 Of Paradise, and in the self-same guise
 As thou shalt see when the last Judgment is." 45
 As sudden lightning-flash upon our eyes
 Scatters the visual spirits, so that sight
 Is gone, though clearest forms before us rise,
 So round about me shone a living light,
 And left me so enswathèd in its veil 50
 Of brightness, that nought met my gaze aright.
 "The love which doth to calm this heaven prevail
 Such welcome ever gives to spirit new,
 That for its flame meet candle may not fail."
 No sooner had within me those words few 55
 Found entrance, than I felt that I arose
 Above all virtue that before I knew,
 And a new power of vision in me glows,
 So that no light can boast such purity,
 But that mine eyes would meet it with repose. 60
 I saw a glory like a stream flow by,
 In brightness rushing, and on either shore
 Were banks that with spring's wondrous hues might vie.

³⁴ The "more worthy tongue" is not the voice of a mightier poet, but, as in *Purg.* xxx. 13, the trump of the Last Judgment, which will reveal the full glory of the saints.

³⁷ Possibly " . . . of a leader freed from his task " (*Bull.*).

³⁹ The Empyrean lies outside the limitations of the *Primum Mobile*, outside, therefore, the time which is the measure of motion. Light, love, joy are its only elements.

⁴³ The two companies are the spirits of the just and the angels. The former is to be seen in vision as it will be seen in the Last Day; no longer, as before, simple forms of light (*C. x. 64, xxx. 64, et al.*), but with human form and features.

⁴⁶ The first sensation is that of a flash of lightning, not passing away, but enwrapping the seer as in a robe of light. At first he could see nothing more. That, Beatrice tells him, is the welcome—the *salute* (we note the reappearance of the memorable word of the *V. N. c. 10, 11*) which the Empyrean gives to those who enter it; and it fits the candle for the flame, gives, that is, the strength required for the new life, and so the new-comer finds himself no longer dazzled even by the clearest light.

⁶¹ I have taken "*primavera*," as in *Purg.* xxviii. 51, in the sense of "spring-flowers."

And from that river living sparks did soar,
 And sank on all sides in the flow'rets' bloom, 66
 Like precious rubies set in golden ore.
 Then, as if drunk with all the rich perfume,
 Back to the wondrous torrent did they roll,
 And as one sank another filled its room.
 "The high desire that burns within thy soul 70
 To gain full knowledge of the wondrous sight,
 More joy gives me the more it spurns control.
 But of this water thou must drink aright,
 Ere thou canst slake thy strong desire to know."
 So spake the Sun that filled mine eyes with light, 75
 And then: "The stream, and topazes that go
 Now in, now out, and smile of pleasant flowers,
 Of their true essence but dim preludes show:
 Not that the things are hard, but that thy powers
 Of vision are defective found, and weak, 80
 And ne'er have looked on glory such as ours."
 There is no babe who doth so quickly seek
 His mother's breast, if he should wake, perchance,
 At hour so late it doth his custom break,
 As I did, that mine eyes might gaze with glance 85
 That better mirrored, bending to the wave,
 Which flows that we in goodness may advance.
 Soon as I did with its clear waters lave
 Mine eyelid's edge, to me it did appear
 As though instead of length, a round it gave. 90
 Then, as a crowd who masks of revel wear,
 Seemeth quite other than 'twas wont to be,
 When they have laid aside their alien gear,

Probably the river represents the grace and love of God; the ruby-sparks are the angels; the flowers on the banks are the souls of the righteous; the odours are the "sweet savour" of their merits, and the movements of the sparks represent accordingly the ministries of angels to those souls, ministries of joy and fellowship, as before of help in conflict. In the symbolism of gems the topaz represents the twofold love of God and man (Marbodius, *De Gemmis*, in Neale's *Medieval Hymns*, p. 65).

73 Men must drink of that river of light, *i.e.*, of God's grace and love, before their thirst for truth (*Purg.* xxi. 1) can be satisfied.

76 What is seen is but the figure of the Truth, not obscure in itself, but only through the imperfect knowledge of the beholder.

83 Once more we have one of the poet's studies of child-life (C. xxiii. 121, xxx. 140; *Purg.* xxiv. 108, xxx. 44). Comp. 1 *Pet.* ii. 2.

90-99 As the seer bathes his eyes in the illuminating stream its form changes. It becomes circular like a rose. The sparks and flowers are seen to be the two courts of Heaven, the

So for me changed to nobler revelry
 The flowers and the sparks, and so I saw 96
 Both of Heaven's cohorts manifest to me.
 O glory of our God, through which I saw
 The triumph high of that His kingdom true,
 Grant me the power to tell what then I saw !
 A Light there is on high which brings to view 100
 Him who creates to those that creatures are,
 Who only in that vision peace ensue ;
 And then it spreads in figure circular
 So far and wide, that its circumference
 To gird the sun would be too wide by far. ! 105
 All that it shows is one ray's effluence,
 Reflected from the *Primum Mobile*,
 Which all its life and power deriveth thence.
 And as a cliff itself doth mirrored see
 In lake that lies below, as if it found 110
 Joy in its wealth of flowers and many a tree,
 So, standing o'er that light, all round and round,
 Thousands I mirrored saw of every grade,
 All who from us their way have thither wound.
 And if the lowest rank such glory made, 115
 Think what must be the magnitude immense
 Of that bright Rose in furthest petals rayed ;

angels and the saints. To tell of that vision he invokes, no longer Urania only, as in *Purg.* xxix. 41, or Apollo, as in C. i. 13, but the very splendour of God Himself, and emphasises the glory of what he saw, as with "Christ" in C. xii. 71, xiv. 104, xix. 104, xxxii. 83, by the triple iteration of the same word rhyming with itself.

¹⁰⁸ Comp. C. lli. 85, and Aug. *Conf.* i. 1 : "*Fecisti nos ad Te, et inquietum est cor nostrum donec requiescat in Te.*" That light of God is still, as in C. xxviii. 16, the centre of all blessedness ; but as we are in the region of the visible universe, it is seen no longer gathered into a point of infinite brightness, but larger than the sun, and its glory spreads forth, beyond the *Primum Mobile*, in the Empyrean, from which that sphere derives its movement.

¹¹⁴ What the poet sees is the company of saints, all who have reached the Empyrean, rising tier above tier, and mirrored, as a flower-clad hill is mirrored in a lake, in the light below, which is as the crystal sea of *Rev.* iv. 6. That forms the golden centre of the heavenly rose, and its petals are the ranks of glorified saints. Of these he describes only the lower ranks, the highest, however, in honour, that so men may judge of what the rest must be. The imagery of the rose was suggested, as some have thought, by the rose-windows of Gothic cathedrals, such as Dante may have seen in France or Germany or Italy, or, as others, by the golden rose which the Popes gave, and still give, every year to some royal personage whom they delight to honour (*Church, Ess. and Rev.* p. 81). A memorable sermon from Innocent III. (*Serm.* xviii. *Opp.* ed. Migne, vol. iv.) on such an occasion dwelling on the mystic symbolism of the form, the colour, the fragrance of the rose, may, on this theory, have suggested Dante's "rose." The Papal rose is mentioned in *Conv.* iv. 29. The former, however, seems to me the more probable ; but I do not see that either explanation is required ; and it has to be remembered that the larger rose-windows, such as those of Chartres, Laon, and Rheims, belong to the latter part of the 12th, or to the 13th century. The imagery might well, in such a mind as Dante's, be of spontaneous growth. Comp. C. xxxii. 40, π.

Nor in the height nor depth was visual sense
 Astray, but took the whole wide circuit in,
 The measure and the mode of joy intense. 120
 There Far or Near doth neither lose nor win;
 For where God rules in full immediate power,
 The laws of Nature find no place therein.
 And in the gold of that eternal Flower,
 Which spreads, dilates, and pours its rich perfume 125
 To that Sun, ever in its springtide hour,
 As one who fain would speak and yet is dumb,
 Me Beatrice drew, and said: "Behold
 How all the white-robed host have here found room.
 See what wide space our city doth enfold; 130
 See how each seat is furnished with its guest,
 That few are lacking now within our fold.
 On that high seat whereon thy glances rest,
 Because above it shines a radiant crown,
 Before thou sup at this our marriage feast, 135
 Shall sit th' imperial soul, on earth well known,
 Henry the Great, whose guidance Italy
 Shall know ere she be ready to bow down.
 Blind greed of gain, that casts its evil eye
 Upon you, this hath made you like a child 140
 Who spurns his nurse and will of hunger die.
 And in the Court divine shall one be styled
 Its Prefect, who to tread with him one way,
 Open or secret, is unreconciled;

¹²¹ The words seem hardly consistent with l. 115. Probably the *a fortiori* argument of the latter is for the reader, not the poet. For him in that Empyrean there is no far nor near. God works immediately, and the natural law that makes the distant less distinct than the near has no place. In this he follows Aquinas: "*Qua videntur in Deo . . . simul et non successive videntur*" (1 *Summ.* i. 12, 10); "*Divinum lumen aequaliter se habet ad propinquum et distans*" (*Summ.* i. 89, 7).

¹²⁶ The fragrance of the rose, like the incense of *Rev.* v. 8, is the praise of the saints to the Eternal Sun of Righteousness, which is its centre, the "yellow" of the rose, and which knows no change of season.

¹²⁷ Grammatically the comparison may refer to Dante or Beatrice. The context is decisive in favour of the former. For the "white robes" of 129, see *Rev.* vii. 13, 14.

¹²⁸ There is a strange pathos in the fact that the first soul named in connexion with the rose of Paradise is the Emperor whose death had shattered all Dante's hopes, to whom he had looked as the restorer of a theocratic empire (comp. vol. i. p. cix.) Here, by the easy artifice of a prophecy *ex eventu*, he offers, as it were, his *apologia* for his own share in the enterprise, the outcome of which had been so disastrous. That vacant throne, the first that met his eyes, was for the soul of Henry. The man had come, but not the hour. Italy had fallen so low in her selfish greed that she needed the discipline of yet severer punishment.

¹²⁹ The prophecy as to Henry is followed naturally by one as to Clement V., whose double dealing, from Dante's standpoint, had been the chief cause of the Emperor's failure (see *Life*,

But little time will God endure his stay
 In that high office; then shall he be thrown
 Where Simon Magus doth his forfeit pay,
 And thrust the Alagnian one step lower down."

145

CANTO XXXI.

The Rose of Heaven—St. Bernard takes the place of Beatrice.

In fashion of a white rose glorified
 Shone out on me that saintly chivalry,
 Whom with His blood Christ won to be His bride;
 But the other host, which, as it soars on high,
 Surveys, and sings, the glory of its love,
 The goodness, too, that gave it majesty,—
 As swarm of bees that deep in flowerets move
 One moment, and the next again return
 To where their labour doth its sweetness prove,—
 Dipped into that great flower which doth adorn
 Itself with myriad leaves, then mounting, came
 There where its love doth evermore sojourn.
 Their faces had they all of living flame,
 Their wings of gold, and all the rest was white,
 That snow is none such purity could claim.
 And to the flower from row to row their flight
 They took, and bore to it the peace and glow,
 Gained by them as they fanned their flanks aright.

5

10

15

vol. i. p. cviii.) For him there is no throne in Heaven, but the pit of the simonists in Hell. Boniface VIII. (the Alagnian) had thrust down Nicolas III. (*H.* xix. 70-87); he was waiting for Clement. Poltmann in his *Römerung K. Heinrich's VII.* defends the action of Clement and the Roman Curia.

There is something almost startling in the fact that these are the last words of Beatrice. She disappears now, as Virgil had disappeared before, and she leaves Dante, not with any parting words that recall the old love of earth, not with any doxology or revelation of divine truth that might belong to her transfigured character as Divine Wisdom, but with the condemnation of a Pope altogether in the tone of *C.* xxvii. 40-66; *H.* xix. 1-12. I content myself with calling attention to the fact. I do not venture to explain it.

⁴ The other company is that of angels, who are as bees that plunge in and out of the petals, as before they had been engaged in like ministries, like the ruby-topaz sparks that plunge in and out of the flowers (*C.* xxx. 64-69), returning to the central "yellow" of the rose, which is the symbol of the presence of God.

¹⁴ White and gold, as in *Dan.* vii. 9, x. 5, are symbols, each of them, of absolute purity.

¹⁶ The function of the angel-bees is to carry to the souls of the saints the peace and ardour which they have themselves gained.

Nor did the crowd then moving to and fro,
 Between the flower and that which rose above, 20
 Impede the sight or splendour of the show ;
 Seeing that the light of God doth freely move
 Through the whole world, as merit makes it right,
 So that nought there can hindrance to it prove.
 This realm, secure and full of great delight, 25
 Filled with the hosts of old or later time,
 To one sole point turned love alike and sight.
 O Trinal Light, that in one star sublime
 Dost with thy rays their soul so satisfy,
 Look down with pity on our storm-beat clime ! 30
 If strangers, bred beneath some far-off sky,
 Where day by day revolves fair Helice,
 With him, her son, in whom her joy doth lie,
 Gazing on Rome and all her majesty,
 Were struck with wonder, when the Lateran 35
 Was eminent above all things that be,
 I, who to God had now passed on from man,
 From time to that great sempiternal day,
 From Florence to a people just and sane,—
 Think what amazement then my soul did sway ! 40
 Truly with this and with the joy 'twas mine
 To have no wish to hear, nor words to say.

¹⁹ Actually, however (we are, as it were, gazing on the dissolving views of the poet's dream), the angels descend from the throne of God, which is above the rose. It might have been thought that their number would have obscured the glory of that throne ; but the Divine Light cannot be so intercepted ; it finds its way to whosoever is worthy of it.

²⁶ The people of old time and new are respectively those who lived before and after the coming of the Christ, the people of the Old and New Testaments.

²⁸ In the contemplation of the infinite peace of that Triune Light the poet, still tempest-tost and vexed, can but pray that it may work out a great calm for his own troubled soul, and for the yet more troubled world.

³² Helice (Ovid, *Fast.* iii. 100) is identified (*Purg.* xxv. 131) with Callisto, and so with Ursa Major. The people thus described are those who came from the North, probably, *i.e.*, Germans, and found themselves in Rome. The words may be a reminiscence of such pilgrims in the year of the Jubilee (*H.* xviii. 29), but I incline to think that the scene now described was a more recent one, and that the thought of Henry VII.'s throne led on to the recollection of his coronation in St. John Lateran, when that church thus occupied a position of greatness which it had never held before or since. It will be remembered that the Leonine city, including St. Peter's, was occupied at that time by the troops of Robert of Naples, and the Lateran became, therefore, the Emperor's headquarters (*Life*, vol. i. p. cii.)

³⁷ In the structure of the poem the words are supposed to belong to the year 1300. They were, as we know, written within the last few years or months of the poet's life. Age had not dulled the edge of his resentment. Florence still stood out in his memory as the greatest possible contrast to the city of God. It is the last allusion to Florence in the *Commedia*.

And as a pilgrim who, with eager eyne,
 Finds, gazing on a temple, full delight,
 And hopes some day to tell how fair the shrine, 45
 So, as I walked amid that living light,
 On all around I also cast mine eye,
 Now up, now down, and circling left or right.
 Faces I saw that called forth charity ;
 Another's light and their own smiles shone there, 50
 And gestures graced with every dignity.
 That form of Paradise in outline fair
 Already had my glance in full surveyed,
 Not gazing yet with fixed glance anywhere ;
 And now I turned, with wish more ardent made, 55
 To ask my Lady, as with doubt distrest,
 Of many things which on my spirit weighed.
 One thing I meant : another met my quest,
 I looked for Beatrice, and behold !
 An old man, clothed as are the people blest. 60
 His eyes and cheeks were flushed with joy untold,
 Blended with look of mild benignity,
 And pitying mien as of kind father old.

⁴⁸ Whether l. 34 referred to the Jubilee of 1300 or not, it at least led on by a natural association of ideas to the memories of that year. As he had seen pilgrims at St. Peter's look with wandering and wondering eyes over the great assembly of cardinals, bishops, priests, deacons, and the like, as they sat in their stalls, so was the poet now, in the Rome of which "Christ was a Roman" (*Purg.* xxxii. 102). He was as a "barbarian" in the midst of these wonders.

⁵⁰ The disappearance of Beatrice has been already noticed (C. xxx. 148). The seer is not as yet aware of her departure, but he turns as to her, and he finds St. Bernard. We can scarcely doubt, I think, that this somewhat startling change was meant to represent a like change in Dante's inner life. I venture to suggest that it indicates that he had passed, in his theological reading, from Aquinas to St. Bernard, and that, marvellous as was the dogmatic fulness and clearness of the former, he found in the latter that which raised him to a higher level of spiritual intuition. Throughout the *Paradise* Beatrice has been, as it were, the mouth-piece of the wisdom which Dante had learnt from St. Thomas, had answered every question, and drawn the lines of demarcation between truth and error. But there was something higher even than this, and in his case, as in that of a thousand others, St. Bernard had met a want which Aquinas had not met. And if I were asked to say what work of the Saint of Clairvaux had probably had this effect, I should name without any hesitation his eighty-five sermons on the *Song of Solomon* and the Homilies *De Laudibus Virginis Matris*.

⁶¹ The description corresponds exactly with all that is recorded of the fascinating sweetness and benignity of St. Bernard's character. It was given to him to be the master of the hearts of men, as Aquinas was of their intellect. "A youth of high birth, beautiful person, graceful manners, irresistible influence," is Milman's picture of the natural man (*L. C.* iv. 309), which has, as its companion portrait, a description of his work. "His preaching awed and won all hearts. Everywhere St. Bernard was called in as the great pacificator of religious, and even of civil, dissensions. His justice, his mildness, were equally commanding and persuasive" (*Ibid.* 313).

"And where is she?" I asked full instantly.
 Then he: "That wish of thine to satisfy 65
 Thy Beatrice from my place sent me;
 And if to that third round thou turn thine eye,
 From the first rank, thou'lt see her yet once more,
 Upon the throne her merits gained on high."
 Without reply my look I upwards bore, 70
 And saw that she with glory bright was crowned,
 The eternal rays reflecting evermore.
 Not from that sphere where highest thunders sound
 Is mortal eye so far removed in space,
 In whatsoever sea's deep waters drowned, 75
 As was my sight from Beatrice's face.
 Yet this was nought to me; her image fair
 Came not through medium that could mar its grace.
 "Lady, in whom my hope breathes quickening air,
 And who for my salvation didst endure 80
 To pass to Hell and leave thy footprints there,
 Of all mine eyes have seen with vision pure,
 As coming from thy goodness and thy might,
 I the full grace and mercy know full sure.
 Thou me, a slave, to freedom didst invite, 85
 By all the means and all the methods whence
 The power could spring to work such ends aright.
 Still keep for me thy great munificence,
 So that my soul, which owes its health to thee,
 May please thee, free from each corporeal sense." 90
 So prayed I, and in that her distance she,
 When she had looked, with loving smile, again
 Turned to the Fount that flows eternally.

⁶⁴ One notes the supreme naturalness of the question, "Where is she?" not "Where is Beatrice?"

⁶⁵ The departure of Beatrice is explained. It was time to fulfil the resolve with which the *V. N.* ended. He returns to the personal Beatrice whom he had loved, and she ceases to be, as Divine Wisdom or Theology, the interpreter of Aquinas. He will place her, the daughter of Folco de' Portinari, side by side with Rachel, the companion of the Virgin and St. Lucia (*H.* ii. 94-102). She is seen with the crown, the *aureola* of saints (Aquinas *Summ.* iii., *Suppl.* 961). She is far above, at an immeasurable distance from him; yet, as there the "far" or "near" of the Empyrean are not as those on earth, he sees her clearly.

⁷⁹ The lover becomes the worshipper and pours out his gratitude. For his sake Beatrice had trodden the paths of Hell (*H.* ii. 70). By many ways, the visions he had had on earth (*Purg.* xxx. 134; *V. N.* c. 40, 43), she had led him onward and upward from his bondage of sin to the glorious liberty of the children of God (*Rom.* vi. 20, viii. 21).

⁸⁶ The eternal fountain, the source of light and joy, is the presence of God, and Beatrice's glance is her prayer of intercession, answering to the poet's entreaty for her help.

Then spake the old man holy : "That thou gain
 The wished-for goal of this thine enterprise, 85
 To help in which me prayer and love constrain,
 Around this garden fly thou with thine eyes ;
 For seeing it will make thy glance more keen
 Further along the ray divine to rise.
 Then she for whom I burn, Heaven's gracious Queen, 100
 With fullest love, will every grace supply,
 Because in me her faithful Bernard's seen."
 As one who from Croatia, say, draws nigh
 Upon our Veronica's face to glance,
 Whom the old story does not satisfy, 105
 Says, while he sees it, as in wondering trance,
 "My Lord, my Jesus Christ, true Deity,
 Was this indeed Thy very countenance ?"
 So was I, as I turned mine eyes to see
 The living love of him who, while on earth, 110
 Tasted this peace in contemplation free.
 "Thou son of grace," then said he, "this glad mirth
 In which we live will ne'er to thee be known
 By fixing gaze on things of lower worth ;

⁸⁷ The garden is in the strictest sense the Paradise of God (C. xxiii. 71, xxxii. 39). The love and prayers of Beatrice have commissioned Bernard to guide the poet in this last stage of his "pilgrim's progress;" and the Queen of Heaven is there, ready to help him in answer to the prayers of the saint who was conspicuously her "*faithful Bernard*." As a matter of history, few men contributed more than the Saint of Clairvaux did to the *cultus* of the Virgin, which spread over Europe in the 12th, 13th, and 14th centuries, and left its mark in the hymnology, the painting, the sculpture, and the architecture of Western Christendom. The lady-chapels of this period were the outcome of the teaching of the *Laudes B. V. M.* already referred to, and still more in *Ep.* 74, where he describes her as "*reuerendam angelis, desideratam gentibus, patriarchis prophetisque præcognitam, electam ex omnibus . . . prælatam omnibus . . . gratie inventricem, mediatricem salutis, restauratricem sæculorum . . . exaltatam super choros angelorum ad celestia regna*." It is worth noting that all these epithets occur in a letter to the Canons of Lyons against the Feast, then recently introduced, of the Immaculate Conception. Against that feast he protests as "*contra ecclesia ritum præsumptam novitas, mater temeritatis, soror superstitionis, filia leuitatis*."

¹⁰⁸ Another reminiscence, probably of the year of the Jubilee,—the exhibition of the *sudarium* or handkerchief on which it was believed the Lord Jesus had left the imprint of His features. The *Veræ Icon* (=true image), which popular usage corrupted into *Veronica*, was one of the distinguishing features of the solemnities of that year (*Vill.* viii. 36; *V. N.* c. 41, but the latter may refer to an earlier exhibition). For the history of the Veronica, see Herzog's *Real. Encycl.* xvii. p. 86. The main points of the legend are that Veronica (the name given to the woman who had tendered the *sudarium* to Christ), had come to Rome in the time of Tiberius; that Clement of Rome had left it as an heirloom to his successors. Mediæval writers, however, Gervase of Tilbury (1210), Matt. Paris (1216), speak of the *effigies* itself as the Veronica, and Dante uses the same language. Bede, by a curious combination, identifies Veronica with the woman healed of an issue of blood, of whom Euseb. (vii. 17, 18) reports that a group of sculpture, including her form and that of the Christ, was to be seen at Paneas, the Cæsarea Philippi of the Gospel. It is at least probable that the old Latin sequence, "*O salve sacrefacies*," and St. Bernard's hymn, "*Salve caput cruentatum*," may have originated in it.

¹⁰⁹ Croatia may have been chosen through the necessities of rhyme, but it serves as a typical instance of the distance from which the pilgrims came. Lines 106-108 may fairly be thought of as representing Dante's own feelings at the time of the Jubilee.

But to the circles most remote look on, 115
 Until thou see the Queen who rules on high,
 Whom all this kingdom doth with homage own."
 I raised mine eyes, and as the morning sky,
 Where the horizon bounds the Eastern clime,
 Excels the region where the sunbeams die, 120
 So, as doth one who from the vale doth climb
 To mountain height, I saw a space afar
 All else surpassing in its light sublime.
 And e'en as there, where we await the car
 Which Phæathon drove badly, burns more clear 125
 Its light, while this and that side dimmer are,
 So did that peaceful oriflamme appear,
 More living in its centre, and each side
 In equal measure slackened flame did wear.
 And at that centre, with their wings spread wide, 130
 More than a thousand angels met my sight,
 Joyous, in light and act diversified ;
 And in their songs and sports a beauty bright
 I saw, whose smile makes glad, with fullest joy,
 The eyes of all the other saints in light. 135
 And could I in my speech such wealth employ
 As in my fancy's flight, I should not dare
 To touch the edge of bliss without alloy.

111 I quote once more from St. Bernard (*Meditt. Pitts.* c. 1), as showing why Dante chose him as the guide who was to lead him onward to the goal of the final vision of God. "*Patrum namque et Filium cum Sancto Spiritu cognoscere, vita est æterna, beatitudo perfecta, summa voluptas. Oculis non vidit, nec auris audiuit, nec in cor hominis ascendit quanta claritas, quanta suavitas, et quanta jucunditas maneat nos in illa visione, quando Deum facie ad faciem vidimus : qui est lux illuminatorum, requies exercitatorum, patria redeuntium, vita viventium, corona vincientium.*"

115 The downward look implied imperfect contemplation of heavenly things. What was needed was a *Sursum Corda*, upward to the Queen of Angels, and beyond her, to the Divine Tri-unity.

125 The Phaethon mythus was obviously much in Dante's mind (C. xvii. 3 ; *H.* xvii. 107 ; *Purg.* xxix. 118). The point indicated is that where sunrise is expected, where there is the maximum of brightness, while on either side the glory diminishes.

• 127 The Oriflamme was, according to one tradition, the banner, the *Labarum*, under which Constantine fought and conquered. Historically it was the flag of the Abbey of St. Denis, adopted by Philip Augustus as that of the French kings. The pole was gilt, the flag scarlet, divided at its edge into flame-shaped strips. Here it is applied to the company of saints that surrounded the Virgin, which grew brighter in proportion to its nearness ; and the banner is described as "peaceful," as belonging to the Emyrean of Peace, in contrast with the warlike use of the Oriflamme on earth.

129 I have, with most experts, taken *arte* as pointing to the office, function, or "act" of the several angels.

134 The "beauty" is that of the Virgin Mother, who looked on the angels with an approving smile which was reflected in their joy. That again belonged to the things which it was not possible for Dante, or for any man, to utter.

And Bernard, when he saw that I stood there
 With eyes fixed fast upon that glowing blaze, 140
 Turned his to her with love so rich and rare
 That mine more eager made thereon to gaze.

CANTO XXXII.

*The Saints in the Rose of Heaven—St. John Baptist, Rachel, Beatrice, Lucia,
 and others.*

WRAPT in his joy, that contemplative man
 Took the free office of a teacher true,
 And with these holy words he now began :
 "That wound which Mary healed with ointment new,
 She, who so fair is sitting at her feet, 5
 Both made the wound and laid it bare to view.
 Within that order made by yon third seat,
 Is sitting Rachel, 'neath that other fair,
 With Beatrice, who thy gaze doth meet ;
 Rebecca, Sarah, Judith, these are there, 10
 And she who was the Psalmist's ancestress,
 Who poured in grief his *Miserere* prayer.
 There thou may'st see, in glory less and less,
 From seat to seat, as I, with each one's name,
 From leaf to leaf through all the Rose progress ; 15
 And from the seventh row downward, e'en the same
 As downward to it, parting every leaf
 Of that fair flower, appears each Hebrew dame ;

³ St. Bernard resumes his function as one of the great doctors of the Church. The picture presented to our eyes is that of a vast circular area, the half of the mystic rose, in which tier rises above tier. In the middle of the topmost row of one semicircle is the Virgin Mother, and in a line below her, bisecting the semicircle, are Eve, Rachel, Rebecca, Ruth, and other holy women of Israel. On the one side of that line are the female saints of the Old Testament, on the other those of the New. Opposite the Virgin, in the other semicircle and on the same level, is the Baptist ; below him stand St. Francis, St. Benedict, St. Augustine, who, in their turn, divide the Old and New Testament saints as before.

⁴ The Virgin is described as anointing, *i.e.*, healing (*Mark* vi. 13 ; *James* v. 14) the wound of sin which Eve, who is seated below her, had inflicted. The words are almost a quotation from Augustine, "*Ille percussit, illa sanavit*" (*Serm.* xviii.) Beatrice, as representing Contemplative Wisdom, is found (as in *H.* ii. 102, iv. 60) in company with her and with Rachel (*Purg.* xxvii. 104). In *V. N.* c. 29 she is spoken of as called to be "under the banner of the Queen of Angels, whom she had adored on earth." Judith finds her place with Sarah and Rebecca, on the strength probably of *Judith* xv. 10 ; perhaps also as representing the life of action, in contrast to Rachel. *Matt.* i. 5, suggested the name of Ruth. These are followed by unnamed Hebrew women, who form a wall of partition between those who lived before and after Christ.

For, as from this side, or from that, belief
 In Christ looked on Him, these are as a wall, 20
 Between those holy stairs partition chief.
 On this side, where, with petals perfect all,
 The flower is found, those souls their seat have won
 Whose faith upon the Christ to come did call:
 On that side, where the semicircles meet 25
 A vacant space that parts them, duly stand
 Who the Christ come with yearning glance did greet.
 As on this side, a throne of high command
 For Heaven's high Queen, and every other throne
 Beneath it, part the space on either hand, 30
 So on the other that of the great John,
 Who, ever holy, bore the desert drear,
 And pain of death, and Hell two years had known.
 Next down the parting line the lot was there
 Of Francis, Benedict, and Augustine, 35
 And others down to us from tier to tier.
 Now see the depth of Providence divine;
 For of the faith to this or that aspect
 This garden filled doth equal space assign.
 And know that, from the step which cleaves direct 40
 Midway the order of those sections two,
 Sit those, to merit who no claim affect,

²⁰ Among the rows of seats reserved for the latter there were some empty places—as, e.g., that for Henry VII.—but not many. Probably Dante wrote under the impression, which never quite forsook the mediæval mind, though it varied in its intensity, that the coming of the Christ to judge was not far off. He too might have written *Appropinquante jam fine sæculi*; as men did in the 10th century. The readings, however, vary, and some MSS. give *di vote*, and others *devoti*.

²² The Baptist remained, in Dante's theory, in Hell, *i.e.*, in the *Limbus Patrum*, till the Crucifixion and the Descent into Hades. Till then none had entered Paradise. As in the *Te Deum*, it was not till Christ had "overcome the sharpness of death" that He "opened the kingdom of Heaven to all believers."

²³ The order of the three names is suggestive. Francis of Assisi is still, as in C. xi., the Saint of his affections. Of Benedict he had sung the praises in C. xxii. 28; of Augustine he had spoken in passing in C. x. 120. Symmetry would have led us to expect a line of Hebrew heroes, as there had been Hebrew heroines on the other side. Probably Dante's view of the Baptist as the starting-point of a new order led him to a different selection.

²⁴ The thought which Dante puts into St. Bernard's lips, that the number of the saved before and after Christ would be exactly equal, is not found in Aquinas; nor, so far as I know, in any of the schoolmen, nor have I succeeded in tracing it in Bernard's writings. It would seem almost as if a new dogma had commended itself to Dante's mind that the symmetry of his mystic rose might not be marred.

⁴⁰ To the same love of symmetry we may probably ascribe the dogma, which now apparently meets us, that the number of the saved who have died in infancy corresponds exactly with that of the saved adults. They fill the lower benches of each semicircle of the great area. As I try to represent the scene which Dante describes, I cannot resist the conviction that he must have drawn his picture, not from any Papal rose or rose-window, though these may have

But plead Another's, with conditions due ;
 For all these spirits were absolved on high,
 Before of choice they had possession true. 48
 Well may'st thou this in every face descry,
 And also in their voices' child-like tone,
 If thou look well and list attentively.
 Now dost thou doubt, thy doubt by silence shown ;
 But I will loosen for thee the strong chain 50
 Which by thy subtle thoughts is round thee thrown.
 Within the ample range of this domain
 No place is found for any point of chance,
 No more than is for hunger, thirst, or pain ;
 For by eternal law each circumstance 55
 Thou see'st is fixed, and all with it agree,
 As to the finger fits the ring's expanse.
 And so this people, sped by God's decree
 To His true life, not *sine causâ* shows
 Its excellence in manifold degree. 60
 The King, through whom this kingdom true peace knows,
 In so great love, and in so great delight,
 That no desire dare ask for more repose,

floated before his mind as similitudes (see note on C. xxx. 117), but from the Coliseum as he may have seen it filled with Henry VII.'s army, or more probably from the amphitheatre of Verona, which if it were ever filled (it is said to be capable of holding 25,000 persons) might well suggest the thought, as a like scene did to the writer of the *Epistle to the Hebrews*, of the "great cloud of witnesses," the "innumerable company of angels," the "assembly of the Church of the first-born" (*Heb.* xii. 1, 22, 23). In such a gathering it would be natural that the lower benches should be reserved for children. I must own, however, that I have not as yet found any record that the amphitheatre was so used in Dante's time. The games referred to in *H.* xv. 122 were held outside the Porta del Palio.

48 The question has been raised whether the "merits of others," through which children are saved, are those of their parents, or, as Aquinas taught, of the Church (*Summ.* iii. 69, 8), or of Christ. Most of the earlier commentators take the former view ; most modern ones the latter. Line 78 is decisive, it seems to me, in favour of the former. The "certain conditions" are circumcision for Jewish, baptism for Christian children. They had no merits of their own because they had not attained to the "*vera electioni*," *sc.* the power of choice between good and evil, which comes when reason guides the will.

49 The words imply that the spirits in Paradise remain at the age in which they depart this life. In this Dante differs from Aquinas (*Summ.* iii. *Supp.* 81, 1, 2), who teaches that all the saints will rise of the same age, *sc.* in the bloom of a perpetual youth, though he admits that those who died in advanced life may have the venerableness, though not the infirmities, of age. Dante's thought that he sees children's faces and hears their voices in souls in Paradise seems to me the natural outcome of the love of child-life of which we have found so many instances (*Purg.* xxx. 44, 79, xxxi. 64, *et al.*). His retaining this as is eminently characteristic as the subtle questioning spirit (l. 45) which remains with him till the last.

50 The first point in the solution of the untold problem is that chance is excluded altogether, even as hunger and thirst find no place in Heaven (*Rev.* vii. 16, xxi. 4). The reign of law is supreme throughout ; therefore the difference of degree, indicated by higher or lower places, which had stirred Dante's mind to questions, is not without a cause. That cause here is the will of God, which, loving all souls, yet distributes gifts and graces according to His will. Children therefore are, as it were, classed according to the "promise and potency" of the grace they have thus received, though they have never been developed upon earth.

All minds creating joyous in His sight,
 Doth, in His pleasure, fill with His free grace 65
 Diversely. Rest content; the effect is right.
 And this express and clear thou now may'st trace
 In Holy Scripture, in those brothers twain,
 Who in the womb were stirred to wrath apace;
 Therefore on locks of different hue 'tis plain, 70
 The Light Supreme, through measured grace supplied,
 Doth place a crown accordant with the grain.
 Thus, without merit from their works, abide
 The people here, each one in different tier,
 Just as their primal vision-powers decide. 75
 Thus in more early times enough was there
 For their salvation, if to innocence
 Were simply joined the faith of parents dear.
 When the first ages did to close commence,
 'Twas meet for males, by circumcision's sign, 80
 To guiltless wings new virtue to dispense.
 But when there came the time of grace divine,
 Without the baptism perfected of Christ,
 Such innocence was kept on lower line.
 Now look upon the face which unto Christ 85
 Bears most resemblance, for its brightness clear
 Alone can fit thee to behold the Christ."
 Showered o'er her face I saw such joy appear,
 And flow out from her on each mind in bliss,
 Created for its flight o'er that high sphere, 90

⁶⁸ As an example of that diversity, Dante, following St. Paul (*Rom.* ix. 13-16), takes Esau and Jacob. Esau was believed to have had the red hair implied in his name, Edom, while Jacob's hair was black. And the two colours were held to be symbols of different temperaments, of different destinies. So it was, Dante argued, with all children. Their crown of light varies with the character, of which even the colour of their hair may be an indication; and so they occupy higher or lower ranks, not through formed habits, but through the difference of their primary capacities. Augustine, it may be noted, takes the two sons of Isaac as a crucial instance against the theory that men's destinies were decided by the stars (*C. D.* v. 1-5). Dante does not indicate how he reconciled his theory of stellar influence with the difficulty thus presented.

⁷⁷ The three conditions of the salvation of infants were: (1) In the early, *i.e.* the patriarchal, age, simply their own innocence and their parents' faith. (2) From Abraham onwards circumcision was required in addition. (3) Under the Gospel, baptism took the place of circumcision. Without the latter even the innocence of infants could not save them from the *Limbus* assigned to them in *H.* iv. 30-35.

⁸⁶ The poet's mind is turned from questioning to contemplation. He is to look on the face of the Virgin Mother, which of all faces is the most like her Son's. Only through her could the worshipper become fit to gaze on that Son's brightness.

⁸⁹ The "minds in bliss" are those of the angels, created to fly (as in *C.* xxx. 64-69) between the throne of God and the souls of the saints.

That whatsoever I had seen e'er this
 Did not my soul in wonder so suspend,
 Nor show so clear what God's high semblance is.
 And that same Love that first did there descend,
 Singing his "Ave Mary, full of grace," 95
 Before her did his ample wings extend.
 To that high song the Court of that blest place
 Made answer full and loud on every side,
 And calmer joy was seen on every face.
 "O holy father, who for me dost bide 100
 Awhile below, and leavest thy sweet seat,
 Where lot eternal calls thee to abide;
 Who is that angel that, with joy replete,
 Looks in the eyes of this our heavenly Queen,
 Enamoured so that fire he seems in heat?" 105
 So on his teaching I once more did lean,
 Who grew more beautiful from Mary's light,
 As from the sun the morning star serene.
 And he to me: "All joy and valour bright,
 That or in angel or man's soul is wrought, 110
 Is found in him, and this is our delight:
 For this is he whose hand the palm-branch brought
 To Mary, when the Son of God most High
 To bear the weight of all our burden sought.
 But come now, follow with thine eyes, as I 115
 Shall tell thee as I go, and those great peers
 Of this most just and holy realm descry.
 Those twain in whom all blessed joy appears,
 Since nearest to our Empress they abide,
 Are as two roots, and each this rose upbears. 120

109 As St. Bernard answers the poet's question, his face glows with a new beauty, as the morning star seen at sunrise.

111 The souls of the saints accept, without a touch of envy (C. xx. 138), the higher glory which the will of God has assigned to Gabriel.

118 Bernard proceeds to point out the more conspicuous occupants of Paradise. The Virgin becomes "Augusta," the Empress of that kingdom, as God had been named the Emperor (C. xii. 40, xxv. 41; H. i. 124). Next to her on the left is Adam and on the right St. Peter. The "fair flower" is the mystic rose, *sc.*, the glorified Church, the kingdom of Heaven. Next in order come the Seer of the Apocalypse and Moses; then Anna, who appears in the Gospel of the Infancy as the mother of the Virgin, and with her (here we have the name that has met us before in H. ii. 97, *Purg.* ix. 55) St. Lucia, whose special favour to the poet is again noted.

He, on the left hand, standing at her side,
 Is the great Father through whose daring taste
 The human race such bitterness hath tried :
 On the right hand see the ancient Father placed
 Of Holy Church, who was from Christ alone 125
 With keys of this fair flower of beauty graced ;
 And he who saw, while yet life's course did run,
 All the dark coming years of that fair Bride,
 Who with the spear and nails was wooed and won,
 Beside him sits ; and on the other side 130
 The leader under whom the manna fed
 The people, thankless, wayward, stiff with pride.
 O'er against Peter see'st thou Anna's head,
 So glad to look upon her daughter's face,
 Her eye moved not as she 'Hosanna' said. 135
 And o'er against the Father of our race
 Sits Lucia, she who called thy Lady fair,
 When thou to foul shame didst thy brow abase.
 But since thy time of vision fast doth wear,
 Here will we stop as doth the tailor wise, 140
 Who makes his coat as he hath cloth to spare.
 And to the Primal Love bend we our eyes,
 That, looking on Him, thou as far may'st wend
 As, through its brightness, in thy nature lies.
 In very deed, lest thy course backward tend, 145
 Moving thy wings and thinking to progress,
 'Tis meet that prayer the help of grace should lend.
 This grace she gives who helps thee in distress,
 And thou shalt follow with affection
 So that my words cease not thy heart to bless." 150
 And so he spake this holy orison.

¹⁴⁰ The minds of critics have been much exercised by the commonness, not to say vulgarity, of the comparison. Dante, I imagine, would have said that the proverb said what he wanted, and would perhaps have added, "*Lascia dir le genti*" (*Purg.* v. 13). This was what he said to himself when he found himself within one Canto of his appointed bourne. This he would say to others in explanation of his seeming haste to finish. He might have pleaded that a proverb as common had once found a place in the history of St. Paul's conversion (*Acts* ix. 5).

¹⁴³ In *H.* iii. 6 the term "primal Love" is specially applied to the Holy Spirit; here it is used of the Godhead in its triune perfection (*C.* xxxiii. 115-120).

¹⁴⁶ The thought is reproduced from *Purg.* xi. 25. There is no true progress without the grace of God, and here that progress is thought of as coming through the intercession of the Virgin Mother.

CANTO XXXIII.

St. Bernard's Prayer to the Blessed Virgin—The Beatific Vision of the Eternal Trinity and the Word made Flesh.

"O VIRGIN Mother, daughter of thy Son,
 Lowlier and loftier than all creatures seen,
 Goal of the counsels of the Eternal One,
 Thyself art she who this our nature mean
 Hast so ennobled that its Maker great 5
 Deigned to become what through it made had been.
 In thy blest womb the Love renewed its heat
 By whose warm glow in this our peace eterne
 This heavenly flower first did germinate.
 Here, in Love's noon-tide brightness, thou dost burn 10
 For us in glory; and to mortal sight
 Art living fount of hope to all that yearn.
 Lady, thou art so great and of such might,
 That he who seeks grace yet turns not to thee,
 Would have his prayer, all wingless, take its flight; 15
 Nor only doth thy kind benignity
 Give help to him who asks, but many a time
 Doth it prevent the prayer in bounty free.
 In thee is mercy, pity, yea, sublime
 Art thou in greatness, and in thee, with it, 20
 Whate'er of good is in creation's clime.
 He who stands here, who, from the lowest pit
 Of all creation, to this point hath pass'd
 The lines of spirits, each in order fit,

¹ The *cultus* of the Virgin has, I suppose, never found a nobler utterance than that which, placed in the lips of St. Bernard, ushers in Dante's last Canto. Comp. Chaucer's paraphrase in his *Second Nunne's Tale*, ll. 29-56 (*Bull.*).

² Apparently a combination of *Prov.* viii. 22 and *Gal.* iv. 4. The Incarnation, with which the Virgin was identified, had entered into the Eternal counsels, and was manifested in the "fulness of time."

³ The "flower" is the mystic rose, *i.e.*, the Church Triumphant of the saved. Its existence depended on the birth of the Man Christ Jesus, and He was born of the Virgin. To those who had won their victory she was as a burning light of love; to those below she was the fount of hope. The early commentators quote from St. Bernard, "*Securum accessum habes, O homo, ad Deum, ubi Mater est ante filium et filius ante patrem.*"

⁴ So it was that Dante at the close of life looked back on his own conversion. Was it not the Virgin Mother who had sent Lucia and Beatrice to his aid? (*H.* ii. 94). Would not she who had begun the work help him to complete it?

On thee for grace of strength himself doth cast, 25
 So that he may his eyes in vision raise
 Upwards to that Salvation noblest, last.
 And I, who never for my power to gaze
 Burnt more than now for his, pour all my prayer,
 And pray it meet not failure nor delays : 30
 Wherefore do thou all clouds that yet impair
 His vision with mortality, remove,
 That he may see the joy beyond compare.
 And next I pray thee, Queen, whose power doth prove
 Matched with thy will, that thou wilt keep his mind, 35
 After such gaze, that thence it may not rove.
 Let thy control all human impulse bind ;
 See Beatrice, how through my prayers she
 And many a saint their hands in prayer have joined."
 The eyes which God with love and praise doth see, 40
 Fixed on the pleader, showed us clear and plain
 How dear to her are prayers that earnest be.
 Then to the Light eterne they looked again,
 Whereon one scarce can dream that eye most clear
 Of any creature might its gaze maintain. 45
 And I, who at that hour was drawing near
 The end of all my longings, as was meet,
 The ardour of my yearnings ended here.
 Then me with nod and smile did Bernard greet,
 That I should upward look, but I became, 50
 E'en of myself, full apt his wish to meet ;

³⁴ We have passed, we must remember, beyond what we call "poetical invocations," and have the heart-prayers of the poet. He fears lest the vision of glory may fail to sanctify and ennoble his after-life. He prays that he may live worthily of his high vocation. Bernard, Beatrice, and all the saints will join in that prayer for his future.

⁴⁰ Was the thought one of pure imagination, or did Dante combine in successive acts the downward look of compassion, the upturned glance of prayer, as he had seen them in the paintings of Cimabue or Giotto? To us the works of those painters seem to fall far below the beauty of which the poet speaks, and we think rather of the Madonnas of Raphael. But we must remember that to their contemporaries they must have presented, as in the story of Vasari and the Borgo Allegri (Lindsay, *C.A.* i. 344) a new ideal of grace, or at least a groundwork on which the mind could build its ideal.

⁴⁵ Once again we have the axiom, the common inheritance of the devout thinkers of all mankind, of the *Convito* as well as of the *Commedia*, of Augustine and Aquinas, that God is the end and goal to which all human desires and aspirations naturally tend, unless nature is corrupted (*Summ.* i. 2, 1-5, 122, 2; *Aug. Conf.* i. 1).

⁵⁰ The seer looks upward from the company of the Saints, even from the Virgin Mother, to the true Eternal Light. Memory and speech alike failed to reproduce the vision. He remembers an ineffable intuition, which is gone from him never to return in this life; but there remains an equally ineffable sweetness to bear witness that it has been his. Snow that has lost

For as my vision to more pureness came,
 Still more and more it passed within the rays
 Of that high, bright, self-verifying flame.
 Thence on far greater glory was my gaze 55
 Than speech can tell ; at that transcendent sight,
 All memory fails and shrinks in blank amaze.
 As one who dreams in visions of the night,
 And when the dream is o'er, the sense imprest
 Remains, nor sees the mind aught else aright, 60
 So am I ; for nigh all that vision blest
 Has passed away, and yet its bliss is felt,
 Distilling all its sweetness through my breast.
 So doth the snow before the sunbeams melt ;
 So to the winds on leaves all borne astray 65
 Was tost the speech in which the Sibyl dealt.
 O Light Supreme, that dwellest far away
 From mortal thoughts, grant Thou this soul of mine
 Some scant revival of that great display,
 And to my tongue give Thou such strength divine, 70
 That of Thy glory at the least one beam
 May to the race to come in beauty shine.
 That, as I call to mind some little gleam,
 And some faint echo sounds in this my song,
 Men of Thy victory will more truly deem. 75
 I trow that so I suffered from the strong
 And vivid light, that I as lost had been,
 If from it these mine eyes had turned for long ;
 And I remember how I grew more keen
 By this to bear it, so that I did blend 80
 My gaze with Might to which no end is seen.
 O grace abounding, which to me did lend
 Courage to look upon that Light eterne,
 Yea, all my power of sight thereon to spend !

its form or colour, the Sibylline leaves that float at random through the air (*Æn.* iii. 441-451), are types of his consciousness of what the dream, the vision, had been. All that he can do is to pray to the Source of all Light for the power to reproduce for future ages some fragments of that glorious moment, the foretaste and earnest of the beatific vision of the future.

⁷⁶ A profound spiritual significance underlies the psychological fact. While we contemplate Divine Perfection we lose the consciousness of our own impotence. The sense of being dazzled and darkened with excess of light comes when we return from that contemplation to the lower region of our earthly life. As far and as long as he could he gazed upon the glorious vision, and that gaze was the condition of its continuance.

In its abysmal depths mine eye did learn, 85
 Bound in one volume with the Love divine,
 The law on which the universe doth turn :
 Substance and accident and modes combine,
 All blent together in such order due,
 That what I tell as simple light doth shine. 90
 The universal form, I deem, I knew,
 Of this great complex Whole, since greater joy,
 As I say this, pervades me through and through.
 A moment there more memory did destroy
 Than all the ages, five beyond the score, 95
 Since Neptune saw the Argo's shade flit by.
 Thus stayed my mind, still gazing o'er and o'er,
 With fixed and immovable attent,
 And, as it gazed, was kindled more and more.
 Before that Light one grows to such content 100
 That to turn back from it to aught beside
 The soul can never possibly consent ;
 Seeing that the good, by which is satisfied
 Our will, is centred there ; outside that rest,
 Defect attends what perfect there doth bide. 105
 Now shall my speech more briefly be compressed,
 Compared with my remembrance, than is seen
 The babe's who bathes his lips upon the breast.

⁸⁷ His first vision is, so to speak, metaphysical. He sees, in that light, pure substance, absolute self-existence, that which is manifested in manifold forms, the accidents of that substance, the loose sheets, as it were (the thought of the Sibylline leaves seems to be with him still), of Omnipotence, bound in one volume with the Eternal Love.

⁹² The mingled sense of memory and oblivion of which he had spoken before (ll. 61-63) is with him still. He believes that he is right in saying that he had seen the "universal form," the *Natura naturans*, of the complex structure of the *Natura naturata*; for in saying that, he is conscious of a sense of enlargement and of joy.

⁹⁴ The comparison is somewhat obscure and has vexed the minds of commentators. The thought, however, seems to be that a single moment brought to the seer's mind a more complete oblivion of the glorious vision than twenty-five centuries had brought to the world of the earliest historical events, of which the Argonautic expedition is taken as a type. The wonder of Neptune at the shadow of the first ship that passed over his waters is commonly referred to Catull. *Epithal. Pet.* 14. There, however, the Nereids are those who wonder, and I am disposed to think that Dante had in his thoughts Val. Flacc. (*Argon.* i. 641-645).

¹⁰¹ As the beatific vision constitutes the supreme blessedness of the Saints, the soul that has once tasted of its joy can never voluntarily turn to anything below it. The bliss is one which ensures, for those who know it, its own permanence (Aquinas. *Summ.* i. 2. 5, 4). There alone is the Supreme Good, and all outside is either a counterfeit, or a defective and imperfect, good. We turn, in Browning's phrase, from "Man's nothing perfect to God's all complete" (*Saul*).

¹⁰⁷ Even of the fragment that is remembered of that vision, the poet's words must be wary and few, as those of an infant not yet weaned (*P's.* cxxx. 3).

Not because more than one pure form serene
 Was in the living Light I gazed upon, 110
 Which ever is what It hath ever been,
 But through the sight, which greater force had won
 In me by gazing, one Form met mine eye
 Still varying as I changed, yet ever One ;
 In the profound bright substance seen on high 115
 Of that clear light three circles seemed to glow
 Of threefold colour, knit in unity ;
 And as one rainbow by another, so
 This was by that reflected, while the third
 As fire appeared that from them both did flow. 120
 Ah me ! how brief and stammering now is heard
 All speech compared with thought, and that to this
 I saw is such that "small" is scarce the word.
 O Light Eternal, who, of all that is,
 Dwell'st in Thyself, and know'st Thyself alone, 125
 And knowing, lov'st Thyself, Thyself thy bliss !
 That interpenetration which, as shown,
 Appeared in Thee as 'twere reflected light,
 As on mine eyes in measure faint it shone,
 Within itself, in its own radiance bright, 130
 Seemed to me to present our image clear,
 Wherefore upon it full fixed was my sight.
 As doth the expert geometer appear,
 Who seeks to square the circle, and whose skill
 Finds not the law by which his course to steer, 135

¹⁰⁰ What has to be described, as far as speech avails, is the glory of the Trinity in Unity. It is simple, one, for evermore the same, and yet there is in that oneness a threefold and distinct glory. One notes, not without satisfaction, that Dante shrinks from the anthropomorphism of Byzantine and early Western Art, in which the Ancient of Days was represented in the form of venerable age (Lindsay, *C. A.* i. 248). For him, as for the more primitive Christian artists (*Ibid.* i. 8), the rainbow reflecting rainbow (*Rep.* iv. 3) is the only adequate symbol of the "God of God, Light of Light" of the Nicene Creed, while the fire of love that breathes from both is that of the Holy Spirit, "proceeding from the Father and the Son." But even that symbolism is so faint and poor that it is not enough to say that it is infinitely little by the side of the infinitely great. The Light which he sees, the very Being of God, alone comprehends Itself, and finds in that self-knowledge Its supreme love and bliss.

¹³¹ The human element, however, is not entirely absent. In that "Light of Light," the Eternal Son, the poet sees a human form and features, "perfect God and perfect Man." I venture to quote from Browning's *Saul* what seems to me the best commentary on the passage :—

"'Tis the weakness in strength that I cry for ; my flesh that I seek
 In the Godhead ! I seek and I find it. O Saul ! it shall be
 A Face like my face that receives thee ; a Man like to me
 Thou shalt love and be loved by for ever ; a Hand like this hand
 Shall throw open the gates of new Life to thee ! See the Christ stand !"

¹³² So in *Conv.* ii. 14, *Mon.* iii. 3, the squaring of the circle is stated as a problem beyond

So was I, as that sight my soul did fill:
 Fain would I see that form in circle set,
 And how, within, it found its true place still;
 But for that task my wings were feeble yet,
 Only my mind was stricken through and through, 140
 As by a flash that all my yearning met.
 Strength failed that lofty vision to pursue;
 But now, as whirls a wheel with nought to jar,
 Desire and will were swayed in order due
 By Love, that moves the sun and every star. 145

the reach of man's powers, being coupled with the question as to the number of angels, as points which, for that reason, men had ceased to discuss. Any mathematical student in the 13th or 14th century might, of course, have come to that conclusion, but I incline to think that this is one of the instances in which, as in C. ii. 61-148, we may trace in Dante the pupil of Roger Bacon. The principle which is sought in vain is the exact relation of the circumference to the diameter.

¹³⁶ The seer has to confess that Theology, like Geometry, has its insoluble problems. He would fain have seen how "the image was fitted to the circle," *i.e.*, the human nature to the Divine, in the person of Christ. "To this he could not attain by any flight of the wings of intellect, but for a moment it was flashed upon him by intuition. There was no power to reproduce that intuition, but there was something better. Desire and will were stirred as they had never been stirred before by the Love which moves the stars.

So, according to the poet's plan, the third *Cantica* of his great poem ended, as the other two had done, with the word "star." As he wrote that word and laid down his pen, the long task of twenty years or more came to its close. There was no longer that to work on, no longer that for which to bring out the "things new and old" which that all-searching intellect had gathered into its treasury, to which Heaven and Earth had alike contributed (C. xxv. 2). That channel for the utterance of his thoughts was closed. We ask, but cannot answer the question, did he really look on his work as finished in all its parts? Or did he polish and repolish, add or alter, insert or modify, allusive references to persons, places, theories of philosophy or theology? I incline to the belief that little or nothing of this kind was done after he had finished the *Paradiso*, and sent it, or part of it, to Can Grande. The work was done, and, with the lofty self-confidence of his nature, he felt sure that it would live. Comp. *Ep. to C. G. c. 3*.

On this hypothesis, there must have been something like a blank left in Dante's life like that which all men feel who have finished a task on which they have laboured for many years. Even the translator, whose labours have spread over a period of much the same length as that which it took Dante to write the *Commedia*, cannot close his task, as he writes the last line of text or commentary, without feeling that there is loss as well as gain in the completion of his work; that his life will be, in some sense, the poorer for it; that, whatever other studies of biography or literature may occupy his time, he can never hope for a work that will bring with it the strength, the interest, the elevation which he has found in Dante.

CANZONIERE.

CANZONIERE.

SONNET I.

THE FIRST VISION OF LOVE.

A ciascun' alma presa, e gentil core.

To each enamoured soul, each gentle heart,
Within whose ken comes what I now indite,
That they their thoughts on what it means may write,
Greeting in Love, their Lord, I now impart.
Night's hours were minished just by one-third part,
What time when every star shows brightest sheen,
When all at once Love by mine eyes was seen,

SONNET I.

For us this Sonnet has the interest of being the earliest of Dante's extant writings. It is obvious, however, that it is not the work of a prentice-hand, and that though he was only eighteen, there may well have been some four or five years' study and practice, first of Latin, then of Provençal, and then of Italian, poetry. The story is told in the *V. N.* (c. 3). Nine years after Beatrice had inspired his precocious boyhood with a consuming passion (1284), during which he had only had casual glimpses of her, probably in the Church of S. Lucia, he had met her, accompanied by two older friends, after her marriage with Simon de' Bardi, in the street, and she had for the first time given him a friendly greeting with words as well as looks. As a married woman, she was free to grant him a recognition which would before have been unmaidenly. The old flame, which perhaps had slumbered after he had heard of her marriage, was rekindled, and he went home to dream what is here recorded. As told in the Sonnet, still more as told in the *V. N.*, it is noteworthy as being the only instance of any approach to the sensuous element of passion. To see what Dante says he saw indicates a perilous, though involuntary, nearness to temptation. Even here, however, the corrective is near at hand. Joy is turned to mourning. The sleep of the beloved one, even then, is as the shadow-sister of death. After the manner of the time, perhaps with some exultation in the consciousness of a new-born power, Dante sent his poem to his friends, among them to Guido Cavalcanti, Cino da Pistoia, Dante da Maiano. Of these, none understood the drift of what in later years he felt had been an unconscious prophecy of Beatrice's early death. Cavalcanti saw in it an instance of the melancholy that mingles with the sweet dreams of love. Cino suggested that Love came to bring him that which his heart desired, and then wept for the sorrow which his passion would bring to Beatrice. His namesake, more cynically, hinted that he was "off his head" and had better consult a doctor.

⁵ Four hours of the night had passed, *sc.*, it was between 1 and 2 A.M., night beginning with Compline at 9 P.M. (*Purg.* ix. 8). Repeatedly Dante notes in the *Commedia* his belief that dreams after midnight come true, and then their meaning is seen (*H.* xxvi. 7; *Purg.* ix. 16-18, xix. 4).

Whose very memory makes my spirit start.
 Joyous seemed Love, and he my heart did press
 Within his hands, and in his arms he bare
 My lady, sleeping, wrapt in silken sheet;
 Then woke her, and that burning heart to eat,
 Gave her; she fed with timid, lowly air.
 Then as he went, tears did his grief confess.

10

SONNET II.

WHAT MIGHT HAVE BEEN.

Guido, vorrei che tu e Lapo ed io.

GUIDO, I would that Lapo, thou, and I
 Were taken by some skilled enchanter's spell,
 And placed on board a barque that should speed well

⁸ Comp. *H.* i. 6, xxxii. 72, as instances of the same shuddering thrill of memory.

¹¹ The word "Madonna" supplies the key to all that follows. In the recognised use of Italian poetry, as in the speech of common life, that term was applied to a married woman only (*Canz.* ii. 13; *Witte, L. G.* ii. 19). The maiden was a *donsella* or *pulsella* (comp. a Sonnet by Frescobaldi, in which he elaborately discusses the advantages of loving one or the other, in *Bart. Lett. Ital.* iv. p. 17). The title thus given proves Beatrice's marriage at the commencement of the *V. N.* beyond the shadow of doubt. What Dante tells us in the *V. N.* (c. 6), that he wrote a *serventese* on the sixty fairest ladies of Florence, leads to the same conclusion. It would have been a breach of conventional etiquette to have inserted a maiden's name in such a poem. A. Pucci, in a poem of the same kind, names twenty-two ladies, and in each case has a word of praise for the husband also (*Lubin.* p. 19). If that conclusion seems at first startling, we may remember that it was the familiar practice of Provençal poets to choose a married woman as the object of a homage in which, ideally at least, there was no element of sensuous desire, only the supreme reverence for grace, beauty, purity. It was, we may admit, a strained relation, not without its risks, and too often the "vaulting ambition" might "o'erleap itself" and "fall o' the other side;" but, as the sequel shows, it was for Dante not a *liaison dangereuse*, but a purifying pain. His love was like that of Sordello, not for Cunizza, but for another Beatrice, the wife of Charles of Anjou (*Purg.* vi. 58 n.), purer than that of Petrarch for his Laura, also a "*donna*," the wife of Hugh de Sade. In the Sonnet before us, the first that he cared to leave to future ages, he was perhaps following in Sordello's footsteps, and in those of Guido Guinicelli, whom he recognised as his master (*Purg.* xxvi. 98), claiming for himself, however, the distinctive merit of rising out of the traditional conventionalities of the Troubadours and other poets, and writing as love taught him (*Purg.* xxiv. 52-54).

¹² The meaning of the vision is not far to seek. His heart burned with a reverential love, which Beatrice accepted, not as another woman might have done, triumphant in a new conquest, but with a timid meekness; and Love wept at the coming sorrow, in which, as a strange foreboding indicated, the homage was to end. For the whole story, comp. vol. i. pp. xiv.-xlviii.

SONNET II.

Notable as the one Sonnet in which the element of a sportive joy, what Quinet has called "the aureole of adolescence," is dominant. How bright and happy might life be, it seems to say, could we but live in an enchanted region, where its stern realities (among them Beatrice's marriage) had no place. It is suggestive that he did not think fit to include it in the *V. N.*

¹ The Guido is Cavalcanti, then Dante's chiefest friend, before his change of feeling as to Virgil's merits or the Epicurean materialism which he inherited from his father had brought about the coolness and alienation which *H.* x. 52-63 n. at least suggests.

Through wind and wave, and with our will comply ;
 So that nor evil chance nor stormy sky 5
 Should be to our desire impediment.
 So, living always in one full consent,
 Desire should grow to dwell in company :
 And Lady Vanna, Lady Bice too,
 With her who nobly fills my thirtieth line.— 10
 Would that the good enchanter these might move
 With us to speak for evermore of Love ;
 And each of them in full content combine,
 E'en as I deem 'twould be with me and you !

BALLATA I.

"DE PROFUNDIS."

O voi, che per la via d' Amor passate.

O YE who on Love's path pursue your way,
 Behold and say

* Vanna, or Giovanna, known also as Primavera (=Spring), and mentioned again in *V. N.* c. 24, *S.* 16, was the object of Cavalcanti's love. Bice, as in her father's will (*Frat. V. D.* p. 98), stands for Beatrice. The third is described as thirtieth in the list of sixty fair ones of Florence, on whom Dante had written a poem of the *serventese* type (see *n.* on *S.* 1), which has not come down to us, and in which Beatrice's name appeared, as by the decree of fate, as the *ninth*. She has been identified with the Donna (the beloved one, not the wife) of Lapo Gianni, or, as some say, Lapo degli Uberti, the son of Farinata, and father of the poet Fazio, who wrote the *Dittamondo*, a kind of Gazetteer in *terza rima*. The fact that Guido Cavalcanti married the daughter of the Farinata of *H. x.* 32 is in favour of the latter view, as also is the mention of Lapo in *V. E.* i. 13. There also he is grouped with Cavalcanti, probably with Dante himself. The leading thought of the Sonnet is the wish that the ideal love could become a life-long reality. But he knows it cannot be. Only the enchanter's wand could bring about such a transformation. The actual history of what was then future presents one of the strange contrasts which so often characterise the "irony of history." Beatrice died in 1290. Cavalcanti was banished by Dante to Sarrazzano, and died of a fever caught in its unwholesome climate in 1300. For Dante himself there was a life of poverty and exile. It may be noted that in some MSS. "Lagia" takes the place of "Bice," as though the Sonnet had been written by Cino of Pistoia, who addresses many of his poems to a Selvaggia, a name of which Lagia may have been a diminutive.

BALLATA I.

The *V. N.* (c. 7) gives the following account of the poem, which is there called a Sonnet, that term being used, at first, in a less restricted sense than it acquired afterwards. This particular form was known as a *Sonetto doppio* or *rintersato*. Dante had sought to conceal his love, but he could not refrain from gazing on Beatrice as he knelt in church, probably in that of S. Lucia, in the *Via de' Bardi*, and near her husband's house. In so gazing, another fair lady sat between him and his beloved one, and many thought, therefore, that he was in love with her. The poet saw in that mistake a means at once of concealment and of utterance. He would encourage it by writing poems which should seem to be addressed to her, and yet give vent to thoughts that were meant for Beatrice. She was to be, as he says, his "screen" against whispering tongues and over-curious gaze. And this went on, he says, for some months, and even years. It was in connexion with this phase of his passion that he wrote the *Serventese* above referred to. Her departure from Florence gave him an opportunity for pouring forth his sorrow as though that had been its cause. For the history of the *Serventese*, see Dietz, *Trunk*, pp. 169-176.

† The allusion to *Lam.* i. 1 finds a parallel in Dante's quotations from the same prophet in his Epistle to the Cardinals (*Ep.* 9). See also the note on *H.* i. 32, and *V. N.* c. 29, 31.

If there be any sorrow grave as mine :
 That ye would list to me is all I pray,
 And then let Fancy's play 5
 Judge if of all woe I am key and shrine.

Love, not for little good that in me lay,
 But his own noble goodness to display,
 Placed me in life so pleasant and so fair,
 That oft I heard behind me voices say 10
 " Ah, through what merit may
 His heart so light be, and so free from care ?"
 Now have I all my wonted courage lost,
 Which came of old from Love's great treasure-store,
 Whence I continue poor, 15
 And shrink when I would any one accost.

And thus, desiring still to act like those,
 Who, in their shame, hide their deficiencies,
 Cheerful I meet men's eyes,
 And weep within and wail o'er all my woes. 20

SONNET III.

DEATH OF BEATRICE'S FRIEND (1).

Piangete, amanti, poichè piange Amore.

WEEP, all ye lovers, seeing Love doth weep,
 Hearing what cause calls forth his piteous cry :
 Love hears fair ladies mourn in sympathy,

¹³ The change is like that of *S. i.* 9-14. The first joy of the new passion, the dream of the impossible, as in *S. ii.*, had turned into a consuming sorrow.

¹⁷ We note the characteristically subjective self-analysis, the forerunner of many like it in the *Commedia* (*H.* i. 6, xxxii. 72; *Purg.* v. 20, vii. 10, xxx. 74-79, xxxi. 64-66; *Par.* vii. 10), the same proud reticence and reserve which characterised the poet from first to last.

SONNET III.

Early in the history of the *V. N.* (c. 8)—probably before 1285—one of Beatrice's best-loved friends died, in the full freshness of her youth, and Dante laments her death in this and the following poem. He describes her as in some respects the complement of Beatrice. She is gay, bright, full of a ready courtesy. God had taken her to Himself, and she was in the courts of Heaven. I have ventured (*Purg.* xxviii. 40 π.), on what seem to me sufficient grounds, to identify her with the Matilda of the Earthly Paradise. In Dante's admiration and reverence she clearly occupied a place second only to Beatrice.

Whose eyes give outward proof of sorrow deep.
 For villainous Death on gentle heart doth heap 5
 The strokes of his most cruel workmanship,
 Wasting what winneth praise from each man's lip,
 In lady fair, save th' honour she doth keep.
 Hear ye what homage Love to her did pay :
 For I saw him lament in very deed, 10
 Over the lifeless form he came to view :
 And often to high heaven his glance he threw,
 Where finds a home the gentle spirit freed,
 Who was a lady of such presence gay.

BALLATA II.

DEATH OF BEATRICE'S FRIEND (2).

Morte villana, di pietà nemica.

O VILLAIN Death, of pity ruthless foe,
 Old parent of great woe,
 Inevitable doom and hard to bear,
 Since thou hast filled my heart with sad despair,
 And to and fro I wander full of care, 5
 My tongue in blaming thee doth weary grow ;
 And if I seek thee pitiless to show,
 Needs must I make men know
 Thy guilt, wherein all wrongs most wrongful are.
 Not that 'tis hidden from men's eyes afar, 10
 But to rouse all to fiery heat of war,
 Who henceforth shall with Love's true nurture grow.
 Thou from the world hast ta'en all courtesy,
 And virtue, that which wins a lady praise :
 In youth's first gladsome days 15
 Thou hast laid low all Love's sweet pleasantry.

¹⁰ The Love who mourns is not the classical Cupid, but Beatrice herself—Love incarnate, whom Dante had seen weeping over the body of her friend (*V. N. c. 8*). That upward look implied the prayer that they might meet again. In the *Purgatory* vision Dante implies his belief that the prayer had been granted, though the transfigured Beatrice dwelt in the higher region of the Empyrean heaven, Matilda in the Earthly Paradise—the one symbolising the wisdom of the contemplative life, the other the joy of active ministration.

BALLATA II.

From *V. N. c. 8*, and a variation of the theme of *S. iii*.

More I tell not who that fair dame may be,
 Than by the exceeding grace each act displays.
 Who treads not life's true ways,
 Let him not hope to have her company.

20

SONNET IV.

LOVE AS PILGRIM.

Cavalcando l' altr' ier per un cammino.

Riding the other day along a road,
 All pensive o'er the thought that made me sad,
 I found Love half-way on my journey, clad
 In the light garb that pilgrim's raiment showed.
 Like one of low estate he on did plod,
 As though his lordship he had cast aside,
 And sighing, full of thought, his course he plied,
 That he might look on none, with head low bowed.
 When he saw me he called me by my name,
 And said, "I come from region distant far,
 Where through my will, thy heart had ta'en its flight.
 And now I bring it for a new delight,"
 Such measure full of him I then did share,
 He fled, nor saw I how he went and came.

5

10

¹⁷⁻²⁰ Grammatically the lines can only refer to the friend of Beatrice, for whom Dante mourns; but he assures us in the *V. N.* that they were meant for Beatrice herself. Possibly the lines were written at first for Matilda, found to be fitter for Beatrice, and so mentally transferred to her. It must be remembered that he had already in *S. iii.* identified Love with Beatrice.

SONNET IV.

From *V. N.* c. 9, where also we are told of the vision which it embodies, and which came to him when he was riding with many others along a rushing stream. I surmise, with Witte, Kraft, Wegele (p. 74), that it connects itself with the expedition against Arezzo, in which Dante took part (1289), and which ended in the battle of Campaldino (*H.* xxii. 6; *Purg.* v. 92; vol. i. p. 1), and that the stream was the Arno, and I find in it the expression of a new-born sense of freedom rising out of the activities of that stirring life. He is no longer under the despotism of Love; his heart no longer devoured by her to whom Love has given it. As he rides he sees Love as a pilgrim (probably enough an actual pilgrim met the cavaliers on their way), with that peculiarly humble look which devout pilgrims affect, and that seems to him the symbol of the state to which what had been the master-passion of his soul is now reduced. The absorption of the mind by one engrossing thought, the waking vision even while he is riding with a troop of horse, is eminently characteristic of the seer-temperament (*Purg.* xv. 115, *n.*). He is not far from the home of her who had screened his love, but love gives him leave to turn his heart to any new delight, whether it be that of battle or the beauty of some new fair one, to be in the future what the "screen" lady had been in the past.

SONNET V.

SEPARATION.

Se'l bello aspetto non mi fosse tolto.

WERE the sweet sight from me not ta'en away
 Of that fair lady whom I long to see,
 For whom I sigh and weep in misery,
 Thus distant from her face so blithe and gay,
 That, which as heavy load on me doth weigh, 5
 And makes me feel such torment keen and dire,
 After such fashion, that I half expire,
 Like one with whom his hope no more will stay,
 Would be but light, and with no terror dread ;
 But since no more I see her as of old, 6
 Love pains me, and my heart with grief is cold
 And so of every comfort I lose hold,
 That all things which delight on others shed
 To me are troublous, and work woe instead.

CANZONE I.

THE LOVER'S PLEA FOR PITY.

La dispietata mente che pur mira.

MY sorrowing soul that only looks behind
 On days gone by of which I now am reft,
 On this side with my heart holds conflict sore ;

SONNET V.

Not in the *V. N.*, but belonging probably to the same period as *S. iv.*, distance from the object of love being the link that connects the two. Here, however, the sense of freedom has passed away. The pains of absence are more keenly felt, the lover misses the daily glance, the occasional salutation, which have been the light of his life. Such may well have been the state of Dante's soul during the Campaldino or Caprona expedition. Fraticelli, however, conjectures that the absence complained of may be that caused by the death of Beatrice, while Balbo assumes that the journey was one to Bologna in company with other students. We owe the discovery of the Sonnet to Witte's researches in the Ambrosian Library at Milan.

CANZONE I.

Not in the *V. N.*, but connected by the fact of distance from Florence (l. 5) in Beatrice's lifetime, with the two preceding Sonnets.

In *Sf. i.* we have the story of an inner conflict. There is the sorrow of remembering happier days, which lie behind him in the distance (*H. v. 122*); there is the desire, though duty calls elsewhere, to go back to the scene of those days. Will not his beloved help him to find peace by sending him, written or orally, the salutation which when spoken had filled his soul with such rapturous delight (*V. N. c. 3, 9, 10, 18*), which made *saluto* and *salute* interchangeable terms?

On that, fond longing that calls back my mind
 To the sweet country that I now have left, 5
 With the strong might of Love prevaiileth more.
 Nor feel I now within the strength of yore
 That can for long ward off my sore defeat,
 Unless, that help, dear Lady, comes from thee,
 Wherefore, if thine it be 10
 To set it free by vigorous emprise meet,
 May it please thee to send thy greeting dear,
 To bid its virtue be of better cheer.

May it please thee, my Lady, yet again,
 Thou fail not now the heart that loves thee so, 15
 Since from thee only succour it can claim.
 A good knight never rides with tightened rein,
 To help a squire who calls him in his woe ;
 For not for him alone he fights, but fame.
 And sure its grief now burns with fiercer flame, 20
 When, I think, O my Lady fair, that thou
 Art painted in it by the hands of Love ;
 So should'st thou much more prove
 For him thy care in greater measure now,
 Since He, from whom all good must needs appear, 25
 For His own image in us holds us dear.

If thou would'st speak, thou Hope, of all most sweet,
 Of more delay of that which I request,
 Know thou I cannot any longer wait,
 For all my strength to bear doth waning fleet ; 30
 And this 'tis fit thou know, since my unrest
 Moves me to seek my last hope ere too late :
 For man should bear with patience every weight

17-19 Few great poets delight more than Dante does in bringing out the nobleness of the true relation of master and servant, knight and squire. The three lines breathe the very spirit of an ideal chivalry by which the young soldier was, we may believe, inspired in his first campaign. *H.* xvii. 90; *Par.* xxiv. 148.

22-26 The passage has often been misinterpreted, but its meaning is sufficiently clear. God, from whom all goodness flows, holds us dear because He sees in us His own image ; so should Beatrice have pity on her lover, for Love has painted her form on the canvas of his soul. The thought is eminently characteristic of the poet, who, even then, was also a theologian.

33 Another touch of the nobleness of chivalry. The young soldier of Campaldino has learnt that he must not call for help, however ready his friend may be to give it (*l.* 17), except under the strongest pressure of necessity. That he appeals to Beatrice now (the poem is obviously addressed to her), is a proof that he has reached that point.

Till the last burden which to death must press,
 Before he seek his greatest friend to prove, 35
 Not knowing what his love :
 And if it chance he heed not my distress
 Then is there nothing that can cost more dear,
 For death has nought more rapid or more drear.

And thou alone art she whom most I love, 40
 Who upon me canst greatest gift bestow,
 In whom alone my hope finds fullest rest :
 Only to serve thee would I long life prove.
 And those things, whence to thee may honour flow,
 I seek and crave ; all else doth me molest ; 45
 Where others fail, thou canst grant all my quest.
 For Yes and No entirely in thy hand
 Hath Love now left ; whence I esteem me great :
 The trust thou dost create
 Springs from thy bearing, pitiful and bland ; 50
 For whoso looks on thee in truth knows well
 From fair outside that there doth mercy dwell.

Now, therefore, let thy greeting quickly speed,
 And come within the heart that waits for it,
 My gentle Lady ;—thou my prayer hast known. 55
 But know, the entrance there is barred indeed
 With that same arrow wherewith I was hit,
 Which Love shot when he made me all his own :
 By it the way is closed to every one,
 Save to Love's envoys, who to ope have skill, 60
 By will of that same Power that doth it bar :
 Wherefore, in this my war,
 Its coming would to me be grievous ill,
 If it approach without the company
 Of that Lord's envoys, who imprisons me. 65

⁴³⁻⁴⁵ Evidence, if that were needed, of the purity of the poet's passion. All that he craves for is the opportunity of serving his beloved and doing honour to her name, and that service is its own exceeding great reward (vol. i. p. xlviii.)

⁵⁵⁻⁵⁶ One notes the recurrence of military imagery, the arrow used as a bolt, the closed gate of the fortress, the arrows of love's artillery, such as may have been suggested by the siege of Caprona, the warfare by which the soul's peace is imperilled.

Canzon', thy journey should be swift and short,
 For well thou know'st how brief is now the day
 For him for whom thou speedest on thy way.

BALLATA III.

EYES DIM WITH SORROW.

In abito di saggia messagera.

In fashion of an envoy wise and true,
 Move on thine errand, Song, without delay,
 To my fair dame thy message to convey,
 And tell her my life's powers are faint and few.

Thou wilt begin to tell her that mine eyes, 5
 Through looking on her angel-countenance,
 Were wont to bear the garland of desires.
 Now, since they cannot see the face they prize,
 Death with such terror on them doth advance,
 That they have made a wreath of torturing fires. 10
 Alas! I know not whither they should fare
 For their delight, and so thou me wilt find
 As one half-dead, unless thou bring my mind
 Comfort from her; therefore tell her my prayer.

⁶⁶ After the manner of the Provençal poets, the Canzone terminates with what was known as the *Tornata* or *L'Envoi* of the poem, considered as a messenger who has to bear tidings to her to whom it is sent. The last two lines seem to indicate something like an anticipation, which the state of Dante's health, as described in *V. N.* c. 14, 23, might well warrant, of an early death. The time was short; Beatrice would do well to give a proof of her sympathy before it was too late. See *B.* iii.

BALLATA III.

The whole poem connects itself closely with the last lines of the foregoing. In the "wreath of torturing fire" by which his eyes were encircled (*l.* 10) we have the poet's version of the weakness of sight described in *S.* xxix.; *C.* xl.; *Conv.* iii. 9; and in *V. N.* c. 11, 12. They, in their mute suffering, are even without words, as an appeal *ad misericordiam*. Not in the *V. N.*, but probably one of the poems referred to in *C.* v. as addressed to the "screen" lady.

BALLATA IV.

"APOLOGIA PRO VITÂ SUÂ."

Ballata, io vo' che tu ritruovi Amore.

I WILL that thou, my Song, find Love anew,
 And that with him thou seek my lady fair,
 So that my pleading, with thy sweet-voiced air,
 My Lord to her may speak in accents true.

Thou goest, my Song, so full of courtesy, 5
 That, though no friend be near,
 Thou oughtest to be bold on every side;
 But if thou seekest full security,
 First find if Love be there.

It is not good without him far to ride; 10
 For she to whom thou should'st thy tale confide,
 If, as I deem, she is with me irate,
 And thou shouldst go without him as thy mate,
 Might lightly on thee some dishonour do.

With a sweet sound, when with him thou shalt be, 15
 Do thou these words begin,
 As soon as thou her pity shalt have sued:
 "My Lady, he who sends me now to thee,
 Seeks, if thy will he win,
 That thou should'st hear if his defence be good. 20
 'Tis Love who makes him, as may suit his mood,
 Change look and hue for your fair beauty's sake:
 Bethink thee, then, why he his eye doth make
 On others look, though heart unchanged be true."

BALLATA IV.

From *V. N. c. 12*. The contrivance of the "screen," who was to serve as a lay-figure for the true object of the poet's love, had led, as might have been expected, in the case of the second lady who was selected for this purpose, to misunderstandings. Beatrice was indignant at what appeared to her his fickleness, a fickleness which brought some scandal on the lady's reputation, and he writes by way of explanation, with a plea of "not guilty." He may have seemed faithless, but his heart has all along been true. Love, indeed, has told him in a vision that it is time that these screens and counterfeits should cease. All that he seeks is to serve Beatrice whether in life, or should she so will it, in his death (ll. 25-34). We note that the poem was to be set to music, "*Di soave armonia*." A friend (H. W. F.) notes the coincidence of thought in Herrick's poem to Anthea—

"Bid me to live, and I will live;
 Bid me despair;
 Or bid me die, and I will dare
 E'en death to die for thee."

Tell her, "O Lady, still his heart hath borne 25
 Such firm unwavering faith,
 That every thought prompts him to service due;
 Quick was he thine, nor ever thence was torn."
 If she doubt what he saith,
 Bid her of Love demand if it be true; 30
 And at the end with meek entreaty sue
 To pardon him, if he hath caused her pain;
 And if she bid me die by message plain,
 Her slave that hest obeying she shall view.

 And say to him who holds all pity's key, 35
 Before thou leave my fair,
 He put forth skill on my good plea to dwell,
 Through grace of my sweet-flowing melody.
 Remain thou with her there, 40
 And of thy servant what thou willest, tell;
 And if thy prayer her pardon winneth well,
 Bid her with aspect fair to speak of peace."
 O gentle song of mine, if thee it please,
 Speed at such time that honour may accrue.

SONNET VI.

INNER CONFLICT.

Tutti li miei pensier parlan d'amore.

MY every thought is fain to speak of love,
 And in them there is such variety,
 That one constrains me own his sovereignty,
 Another will his power a madness prove;

⁴² The closing prayer is for a message of greeting (*salute* in its twofold sense), such as had been asked for in *Canz.* i.

SONNET VI.

From *V. N.* c. 13. An expansion of the inner conflict of emotions indicated in *Canz.* i. l. 6a. All however agree, and this is their point of contact with *Ball.* iii. in their prayer for pity. Is love good or not good? Does the sweetness of the word "*Amore*" correspond with the reality, on the principle that *Nomina sunt consequentia rerum*? In applying the name "Madonna" to the "pity" which he seeks, there is, he says in the *V. N.*, a touch of irony. Pity is not the mistress of his soul.

A third, by giving hope, sweet joy doth move, 5
 And many a time and oft one bids me cry;
 Only in craving pity come they nigh
 Accord, and with heart-tremblings sadly rove.
 Whence I know not to what point I should wend,
 And wish to speak, yet know not what to say: 10
 So find myself in amorous wanderings lost.
 And if I would agree with all the host,
 I must needs now to her my fair foe pray,
 That she, my Lady Pity, me defend.

SONNET VII.

TRANSFORMATION.

Colt' altre donne mia vista gabbate.

WITH other dames thou dost my looks deride,
 And think'st not, Lady, what hath wrought the change,
 That makes me wear a face so new and strange,
 When on thy beauteous form mine eyes abide,
 Did'st thou but know it, Pity had denied 5
 Longer to prove me with the old distress,
 For Love, whene'er he sees me near thee press,
 Puts on such boldness and such sturdy pride,

SONNET VII.

The history is given in *V. N. c. 14*. The poet, returned to Florence, had been at a wedding-feast, where there were many guests. Suddenly Beatrice appeared among them. In part, perhaps, through the confusion and shame implied in *Ball. iii.* and *iv.*, he turned giddy, leant against the wall to save himself from falling, and had to be led back to his own house. As he goes out he hears the ladies who were present, Beatrice among them (only married ladies attended such gatherings, they were all *donne*, *S. i. n.*), talk of him, not without a tone of derision, and when he comes to himself in the "chamber of tears," he writes by way of protest against her hastiness. He had not yet learnt the lesson, "Let the people talk." (*Purg. v. 13*.)

Many commentators infer that the marriage-feast was that of Beatrice's own wedding, and that this was the cause of Dante's overpowering emotion. For the reasons given in the notes on *S. i.*, I am compelled to think otherwise. I surmise rather that it may have been the first time he had seen her since his return from Campaldino, and since the misunderstandings that had pained her (*Ball. iv.*). To look on her as sharing in a wedding-feast may well have renewed the feeling with which he had heard that she had been given to another, and had cursed the altered fashions of the time and the greed of gain which thus marred the happiness of his life (*Par. xv. 103-105*). See vol. i. p. xlv.

It smites my senses, making them afraid,
 Dooms this to death, and that to banishment, 10
 So that I stand alone to gaze on thee.
 Wherefore another's look I take on me,
 Yet so that still I share the loud lament
 Of those the sufferers that are exiles made.

SONNET VIII.

DRUNK, BUT NOT WITH WINE.

Ciò, che m' incontra nella mente, more.

THAT in my mind which clashes with it, dies,
 Whene'er I come to see thee, my fair Joy,
 And when I near thee stand, I hear Love's cries,
 Who saith, "Flee far, if death brings thee annoy."
 My features paint my heart's hue in mine eyes, 5
 Which, as in death-swoon, leans where rest is nigh,
 And drunken with great trembling and surprise,
 It seems the stones cry out to me, "Die, die."
 Who sees me then is guilty of a sin,
 Not comforting my soul, dismayed with ill, 10
 At least in proving that my woe doth gain
 Some pity for me, whom your mirth doth kill,—
 That woe which shows itself in looks of pain
 In eyes which seek death of their own free will.

⁹ I have translated *spiriti* by "senses," as the best equivalent. In Dante's physiology every sense, hearing, sight, &c., had its own special *spirito* (*V. N. c. 1*), but that meaning would not be conveyed to the reader by the English "spirits." Every such "sense" or "spirit" had been stunned as he gazed on Beatrice, and so the fashion of his countenance was altered and he became as another man, only so far retaining consciousness as to hear, as it were, the wailings of each banished sense. The concluding lines half suggest that those wailings seemed to him as an anticipation of the misery of the lost (*H. iii. 25*).

SONNET VIII.

From *V. N. c. 15*. Obviously, in close connexion with *Sonnet* vii., painting in verse what he had sketched before in prose. Why, he asked himself, should he seek to see her when the sight was so full of pain? And yet there rose up such a form of beauty in his mind that the desire to see her was stronger than ever. Would not Beatrice's mirth, that had so vexed his soul, be turned into pity when she read of it.

⁸ We note the same reduplication in *Par. viii. 75*, and conjecture that the story of the Sicilian Vespers (1282) must have reached Florence within a few years of the date of the Sonnet, filling Dante's soul with horror, and transmuting itself into a symbol of the "soul's tragedy," through which he himself was passing. As before in *Ball. iii.*, he pleads the special sufferings of his eyes to move his lady's pity.

SONNET IX.

"NEC MORBOS, NEC REMEDIA PATI POSSUMUS."

Spesse fiate venami alla mente.

FULL many a time there comes into my thought
 The melancholy hue which Love doth give,
 And such woes come on me that I am brought
 To say, "Ah me! doth one so burdened live?"
 For Love with me so suddenly hath fought, 5
 That 'tis as though life all my frame did leave;
 One living spirit only help hath wrought,
 And that remains discourse of thee to weave.
 Then I arise, resolved myself to aid,
 And pale and wan, and of all strength bereft, 10
 I come to see thee, thinking health to find:
 And if on thee my longing eyes are stayed,
 My heart, as with an earthquake, then is cleft,
 Which makes my pulse leave all its life behind.

CANZONE II.

LAUDES BEATRICIS.

Donne ch' avete intelletto d' amore.

LADIES, who have intelligence of love,
 I fain would of my Lady speak with you,
 Not that I think to tell her praises due,

SONNET IX.

From *V. N. c.* 16. The conflict with the many "spirits" (in Dante's sense of the word) is continued. One only holds out, and that remains to tell the praises of the beloved one. Thus sore-smitten he looks to her in hope of healing, but alas! the remedy is worse than the disease (*l. 11*); fearfulness and trembling once more come on him.

CANZONE II.

V. N. c. 18 and 19. Memorable as probably the poem on which Dante looked as the master-piece of his earlier works. It is the first *Canzone* which he inserts in the *V. N.* He quotes from it as his own in *V. E. ii.* 12, 13. In *Purg.* xxiv. 51, he makes Buonagiunta of Lucca, himself a poet, eager to know whether he meets the man who wrote it. His account of its genesis is that he was asked one day by many married and unmarried women of rank (*donne* and *donzelle*, not *femmine*) of Florence, when Beatrice was not with them, whose relations with their worshippers were quite other than those between him and Beatrice, what his love meant, what was to come of it all? And this is his reply. He who would enter into the mind and heart of Dante should read it line by line and word for word. He wished for nothing more than Beatrice's greeting. That was the only blessedness he sought for. And in saying this he was but repeating what Love itself had taught him. The form in which that thought was expressed came to him, he says, as he was walking by a clear river—probably the Arno.

¹⁻¹⁴ The poet will not shrink from his task, though he feels that it lies far beyond his powers. Love is mighty though he is weak. Line 13 indicates the distinction between *donna* and *donzella*, already noted in *n.* on *Sonn.* i.

But speaking to set free my burdened soul.
 I say that, as my thoughts on her worth move, 5
 So sweetly Love thrills all my senses through,
 That if I lost not all my courage true
 My words would make the world own Love's control.
 Such lofty strains I choose not for my rôle,
 Lest I, through coward fear, should vile become ; 10
 But of her gentle life I'll not be dumb,
 And sketch with light touch that surpassing whole,
 Ladies and damsels who know Love, with you ;
 For not to others now my speech is due.

An Angel speaketh in the Eternal Mind 15
 And saith, "O Sire, in yonder world is shown
 A wondrous thing, which hath to being grown
 From a pure soul whose brightness shines on high.
 Heaven which no other sense of want doth find
 Than of her presence, asks of God that boon ; 20
 And every saint implores for that alone."
 And Pity only comes to help our fears,
 For thus speaks God, who of my Lady hears,
 "My well-beloved, now suffer ye in peace
 That this your hope, as long as I shall please, 25
 Wait, where one dwells whom loss of her shall try,
 And who shall tell the damned in hell's unrest
 'I have beheld the hope of all the blest.'"

My Lady thus in highest heaven is sought :
 Now will I ye her worth supreme should hear. 30
 I say, who will as gentle dame appear,
 Let her go with her, for where she doth go,
 In basest souls a chill by Love is wrought,
 Freezing each vile thought till to death 'tis near :
 And who Love wills should see with vision clear 35
 Must either die or else must noble grow.

¹⁸ The lover has already taken a long stride towards the apotheosis of the *Commedia*. Beatrice is already as "God's true praise" (*H.* ii. 103). The saints in Paradise are waiting for her presence to complete their bliss. Pity only pleads that she may be left a little longer for her friends on earth.

²⁸ One cannot read what follows without feeling that we have the first germ of the thought which afterwards, as in *V. N.* c. 23, ripened into a vision and then into a purpose (*V. N.* c. 43), and lastly into the wonder of wonders, the *Commedia* itself.

³⁰ Literature can hardly, I imagine, present a parallel to the nobleness of these lines. The holiness of a perfect and pure beauty freezes each thought of evil. Pride and desire alike are

And when he finds one who doth worthy show
 To look on her, he doth her worth attest ;
 For that her greeting gives him peace and rest,
 So humbling him that he no wrath doth know, 40
 And, as yet greater grace, God gives her this ;
 He who speaks with her cannot end amiss.

Love saith of her, "A thing of mortal birth,
 How can it be so beautiful and pure?"
 Then he looks on her, inly swearing, "Sure 45
 God means in her to work a wonder new."
 Her hue is that of pearl of priceless worth,
 Meet for a lady, fair without excess :
 She is all good that Nature can express,
 And in her, as a type, is beauty true. 50
 From her fair eyes, when we their glances view,
 Spirits pass forth inflamed with Love's sweet blaze,
 And strike the eyes of him who then doth gaze,
 And so pass on, each finds his heart anew.
 Ye see them there, Love painted in her smile, 55
 Where fixed gaze they may not brook long while.

Canzon', I know that thou to many a fair
 Wilt go discoursing, when I thee have sped.
 Now do I warn thee, since I thee have bred
 As Love's own daughter in her lowly prime, 60
 That, where thou goest, thou utter still the prayer,
 "Teach me to journey, for to her I'm sent
 Whose praises are my one chief ornament ;"

calmed. To have conversed with her is the source of unfailing hope. Here again we note the first germ of the *Commedia*. The natural development of that germ is seen in the thought that she herself must come to his rescue (as in *H.* ii. 103) in the "critical minute" of his life.

⁴⁷ One of the few artist's touches in a portrait which otherwise is almost purely spiritual. In the "pearl on forehead white" of *Par.* iii. 14 we may well find a reminiscence of that touch. Comp. *Sonn.* xxvi.

⁴⁸ The ever-recurring theory of "spirits" comes in where modern poetry would speak of "influence" and "expression." The thrill that pervades the lover's frame when fair eyes look on him, whence can it come? So Dante asked, and made answer to himself, Where but from some occult forces, for which "spirits" was at least as good a term as any other (*V. N.* c. 2). In l. 55 a *v. l.* gives *viso* ("face") for *viso*.

⁴⁹ The *sway* of the poem shows that it was meant to reach Beatrice herself, it may be as an atonement for the real or fancied neglect of the past (*Ball.* iv.) Dante hopes, however, for other readers, but is content that they should be "few," if only they be "fit." What he demands is the element, hard to be defined, of the "courtesy" which was so favourite a word with him (*H.* ii. 58, 134, iii. 121; *Purg.* ix. 92, xi. 85; *Par.* xii. 111), and was so eminently characteristic of his own nature.

And if, as weak and vain, thou fear'st to climb :
 Stay not where they dwell who are base with crime : 65
 Learn, if thou canst, to hold thy converse free
 Only with man or maid of courtesy ;
 Who soon will speed thy way in quickest time.
 Thou wilt find Love with her, my Lady sweet,
 Commend me thou to them, as it is meet, 70

CANZONE III.

RETROSPECTION.

E'm' incresce di me sì malamente.

So sad and keen a grief comes over me,
 That full as much of pain,
 Doth pity, as the grief itself, excite.
 Ah me ! for that, in saddest misery,
 A power doth me constrain 5
 To pour my last sigh in a breathing light,
 Within the heart which those fair eyes did smite,
 When with his hands Love opened them to see,
 To lead me to this season of my woe.
 Ah me ! how kind and free, 10
 Pleasant and sweet, did they upon me rise,
 When they, to my surprise,
 Began to work the death which brings me low,
 Saying, " Our light brings peace for thee to know :

CANZONE III.

Not in the *V. N.*, but presenting so many points of contact with *C. ii.* that it well may be regarded as a sketch or an echo of it, and therefore as referring to Beatrice. Kraft, it is true, thinks that Dante speaks of the fair one whom he loved in the Casentino, but on grounds which seem to me quite inadequate ; nor can I accept the view of another critic that it is addressed to the *donna gentile*, either as a flesh and blood reality, or as the symbol of philosophy (Oeynhausen). Yet one never feels quite sure that there may not be some allegoric or mystic meaning.

⁸ The paradox rises probably out of the "screen" arrangement (*Ball. iv.*) Dante was pining for some token that Beatrice still cared for him, but the pity which his manifest distress called forth came from those who were not the objects of his love. The eyes which had given the hope of peace were now averted from him and left him desolate. He finds the meaning of a "sorrow's crown of sorrow" (*H. v. 122*).

Peace to thy heart we'll give, delight to thee." 15

So to these eyes of mine

Those of my Lady fair did sometimes say ;

But when, with knowledge clear, they came to see

That through her power divine,

My spirit from me had nigh passed away, 20

They with Love's banners fled from out the fray,

So that their glorious and triumphant gleam

Was to mine eyes no longer visible :

And saddened still doth seem

My soul, which looked thence to be comforted, 25

And now, as though 'twere dead,

It sees the heart with which 'twas wed to dwell,

And it must part from that it loved so well.

Yea, loving well, it goeth wailing sore,

From out this life's confine, 30

Disconsolate, for Love doth banish her.

She travels hence, so sorrowing more and more,

That, ere she pass the line,

Her Maker listens and doth pitying hear.

Within the heart, pent up in inmost sphere, 35

With what life yet remains all weak and spent,

In that respect that she hath passed away,

There she pours her lament

For Love who drives her from the world to flee ;

And oft with them would be, 40

The spirits, which go sorrowing alway,

Because their help-mate doth no longer stay.

The image of this Lady fair doth dwell

Yet in my mind so clear,

Where Love hath placed it, he who was her guide ; 45

Nor doth the ill she sees upon her tell :

So is she now more fair

³⁹ The lover's sorrow pierces to the dividing asunder of soul and body. The unity of life is gone, and the "spirits," *i.e.*, the faculties of sense, go mourning always, because the "soul," the higher life, as distinct from the "heart," which represents the lower, their guide and companion, is no longer with them. The misery is one which God only knows, which He alone pities.

⁴⁰ The image of Beatrice is still present to his soul, more beautiful than ever, and therefore inflicting fresh pangs of self-reproach, of which the only mitigation is that her lover's

Than ever, with a smile beatified :
 And eyes that work my death she opens wide,
 And waits o'er her who doth her going weep. 50
 "Go, wretched soul, thy way ; yea, rise and go,"
 This cry from love doth leap,
 Who vexeth me as he is wont to do,
 Though less pain doth ensue,
 Because the nerves of sense less keenness show, 55
 And I am nearer now to end my woe.

The day, when she in this my world appeared,—
 As stands in record true,
 In tablets of the mind that now doth fail,—
 My childish frame a strange emotion shared, 60
 A passion keen and new,
 So that it left me full of fear and frail :
 For all my strength a curb did countervail,
 So suddenly that on the earth I fell,
 By reason of a voice that smote my heart : 65
 And if the book truth tell,
 The ruling spirit felt such trembling breath,
 That it would seem that Death
 Had, for it, ta'en in this our world new start :
 Now is he sorely grieved who caused this smart. 70

When the great beauty first upon me shone,
 Which wrought so great a pain,—
 Ye gentle ladies, unto whom I spoke,—
 That virtue which hath highest praises won,
 Its joy beholding plain, 75

strength is failing, and that therefore the overstrained nerves are less sensitive than they were ; that he is also, it may be, nearing the bourne which is the end of all such sorrow.

⁵⁷ Memory goes back to the hour when Beatrice first rose upon the world of the poet's life, and reproduces what we read in the opening chapter of the *V. N.* (comp. *Par.* xxiii. 14). The "ruling spirit" is, as in *V. N.* c. 2, the reasoning faculty of the soul. Here one interpreter has seen something like a parable of the history of the human race in its strivings after wisdom. "He" in l. 70 = Love.

⁷⁴ The "virtue" which "wins highest praises" is, as before, the intellect which felt, even at the outset, that that moment of supremest joy was also the beginning of a lifelong sorrow. Life had lost its freedom, and was subject henceforth to the tyranny of a master-passion. I take l. 81 to refer to the form of the grown-up Beatrice, as taking the place of the child whose beauty had at first won him, and not to the Casentino lady, nor the *donna gentile*.

Felt that new trouble thence upon it broke ;
 And knew the keen desire that in it woke,
 Through what it wrought of fixed gaze and strong ;
 So that with tears it said unto the rest :

“ Here will arrive ere long

80

Beauty, in place of that which I had seen,
 Which worketh terror keen ;
 And she as queen shall be by us confest,
 Soon as her eyes with joy our souls have blest.”

To you have I thus spoken, ladies young,
 Who have bright eyes all beautiful and fair,
 And mind by love subdued and sorrowful ;

85

Wherefore extend your care

To these my words wherever they may be ;
 And in your presence grant I pardon free,
 For this my death, to her so beautiful,
 Who, though she caused it, ne’er was pitiful.

90

SONNET X.

THE BIRTH OF LOVE.

Amor e cor gentil sono una cosa.

Love and the gentle heart are one in kind,
 As the wise Master in his verses wrote :
 Nor one without the other may we find,
 As without reason reasoning soul is not.

⁸¹ Is this only the poetic license of an appeal *ad misericordiam*, or may we infer from it, as from *Canz.* i., that the over-wrought brain of the lover saw in his actual weakness the prognostic of an early death? I incline to the latter view. *Comp. n.* on l. 43.

SONNET X.

⁸² From *V. N. c.* 20. Dante had been asked by a friend to tell him something of the nature and genesis of love, and this is his answer. The sage is Guido Guinicelli (so Juvenal is a “sage,” *Conv.* iv. 13), one of whose sonnets begins with the words—

“ *Al cor gentil ripara sempre amore,
 Siccome angello in selva alla verdura.*”

“ Still to the gentle heart doth Love repair
 As bird doth to the greenwood’s leafy screen ;
 Not before gentle heart has Love e’er been,
 Nor gentle heart before that Love was there ;”

and whom Dante recognised as the most honoured of his masters (“*Maximus Guido*,” *V. E. i.* 13) in Italian poetry (*Purg.* xi. 97, xxvi. 977 ; and *Essay on Genesis and Growth of the Commedia*). An echo of C. i. meets us in *H. v.* 100.

When Nature waxeth loving in her mind, 5
 Love she makes Lord, the heart his chosen spot,
 Within awhile deep slumber doth him blind,
 For little time or long, as fates allot :
 Then in some wise fair dame doth beauty come,
 Which so doth please the eye, that in the heart 10
 Springs up desire for that so great delight ;
 And sometimes so long while finds there a home,
 It bids Love's spirit wake to bear its part :
 And so on lady fair works valiant knight.

SONNET XI.

BEATRICE'S SALUTATION.

Negli occhi porta la mia donna Amore.

My Lady beareth Love in her fair eyes,
 And by it all she sees doth noble make ;
 As she doth pass, all turn for her dear sake ;
 The man she greeteth thrills in ecstasies,
 And bending low, grows pale as one that dies, 5
 And mourns for every least defect he hath,
 And from her presence flee false pride and wrath ;
 Help me, fair ladies, to her praise to rise ;
 All sweetness, and all lowliness of thought
 Springs up within the heart that hears her speech, 10
 And the first sight of her brings sense of bliss ;
 But when she doth a little smile, O this
 May not be told, nor memory this can teach,
 So new and fair a miracle is wrought,

⁹ What Dante includes in gentleness of heart is as the good soil in which love sows the promise and potency of life. Visible beauty, as in Plato's *Phaedrus*, wakens a desire which may be spiritual or sensual, and turns the promise into a reality. What comes to pass in the heart of man has its counterpart in the heart of woman.

SONNET XI.

From *V. N. c. 21*. Growing out of *S. x* and embodying the recollections of *V. N. c. 2*, as *Canz. ii. 57* does those of *V. N. c. 3*. The poet gives, as it were, an experimental instance of the truth which he had just uttered. So it had been with him. So it might be with others. Beatrice's salutation made all good thoughts stir within her adorer's mind, and was the beginning of his blessedness, so that then he knew why she was named Beatrice ("*nomen et omen*"); but when she smiled, the rapture was beyond speech or memory. So in *Par. xviii. 8-12, xxix. 7*, her smiles are reserved till the purified spirit is able to endure them (comp. *Canz. ii. 5*). Here, however, a new element comes in, and Dante dwells on the power of beauty to awaken the potency of love, even in a heart that had not before been "gentle." It can prepare the soil as well as sow the seed.

SONNET XII.

BEATRICE'S SORROW (1).

Voi, che portate la sembianza umile.

O YE, who, with a mien of lowliness,
 And with bent glances testify your woe,
 Whence come ye that your pallid look doth show,
 As though it pitying looked upon distress ?
 Saw ye our Lady in her gentleness, 5
 Her face all bathed in tears of love that flow ?
 Tell me, O ladies ;—my heart tells me so—
 For no base act doth look of yours express.
 And if ye come from scene so piteous,
 I pray you that with me awhile you stay, 10
 Nor hide from me what chance doth grieve you thus :
 For I behold your eyes that weep alway,
 And see your looks so changed and tremulous,
 That seeing this my heart too faints away.

SONNET XIII.

BEATRICE'S SORROW (2).

Se' tu colui c' ha trattato sovente.

"AND art thou he, who hath so often sung
 Of our dear Lady, telling us alone ?
 Like him indeed thou art in voice and tone,
 But thy face seems to strange expression strung.

SONNET XII.

From *V. N.* c. 28. Beatrice's father, Folco dei Portinari, had died (Dec. 1289), and she was overwhelmed with sorrow. Her friends came to her to comfort her, and Dante met them as they left the house (apparently he stood outside, not far off, that he might intercept them), and asked for tidings of her in words which are embodied in the Sonnet. If we ask, as it is natural to ask, where her husband was at this time of sorrow, the probable answer is, "in Paris, or in London, or Somerset, attending to his banking business" (comp. *Par.* xv. 120, 21.)

SONNET XIII.

From *V. N.* c. 28. The friends of Beatrice make answer to the lover's question, and tell him of her depth of grief. They note that he himself is so transformed by sorrow that they could scarcely recognise him.

And why so deeply is thy bosom wrung,
 That thou mak'st others pity feel for thee?
 Hast thou seen her weep, that thou art not free
 To hide thy soul's grief with a silent tongue?
 Leave tears to us, and mournful movement slow,—
 He sins who seeks our trouble to console,—
 For, as she wept, we heard her speech too flow:
 So plain her looks betray her sorrowing soul,
 That whoso would have sought to gauge her woe
 Had fallen down and bowed to death's control."

SONNET XIV.

THE COMPANY OF MOURNERS.

Voi, donne, che pietoso atto mostrate.

"YE ladies, who the mien of pity show,
 Who is this lady that lies grief-opprest?
 Can it be she who in my heart doth rest?
 Ah! if it be, no longer hide it so.
 Truly her features are so changed by woe,
 And her face seems to me so worn and spent,
 That in mine eyes she doth not represent
 Her from whom power to bless was wont to flow."
 "If thou canst not our Lady recognise,
 So downcast is she, 'tis no wonder great,
 Since the same thing has happened to our eyes;
 But if thou look well, by the light sedate
 Of her calm glance fresh knowledge shall arise:
 Weep then no more: too sad, e'en now, thy state."

SONNET XIV.

Not in the *V. N.*, but apparently connected with the same episode as *S. xii.* and *xiii.*, embodying another question and another answer. Had Dante seen his beloved one prostrate on the ground, her eyes red with weeping, her face pale with watching? The brightness and the smiles were gone. Was she the same? "Yes," the wise ladies answer. "Yea," he makes answer to himself, "she is identified by her gentleness and calmness."

SONNET XV.

WHAT TIDINGS OF BEATRICE?

Onde venite voi così pensose.

WHENCE come ye thus with trouble so o'erwrought?
 Tell me, I pray you, of your courtesy;
 For I am full of doubt, lest it may be
 My Lady makes you turn thus sorrow-fraught.
 Ah, gentle ladies, let no scornful thought 5
 Keep you from pausing somewhat on your way,
 And to the mourner fail ye not to say
 If ye of his fair Lady-love know aught,
 Though it be grievous for me that to hear.
 So far has Love from himself banished me, 10
 That every act of his brings death more near.
 Look well, and whether I am wasted see,
 For every sense begins to leave its sphere,
 If ye, O ladies, give not comfort free.

CANZONE IV.

FOREBODINGS.

Donna pietosa e di novella etate.

A LADY pitiful, in youth's fresh bloom,
 And furnished well with human gentleness
 Was nigh, when often I on Death did call,
 And she mine eyes beholding full of gloom,
 And hearing those my words of vain distress, 5
 Was moved to fear, and tears began to fall;

SONNET XV.

Yet another utterance of the same time of sorrow. Cannot the gentle ladies with whom he has conversed give him some tidings of his Beatrice? Even if those tidings should be sorrowful, it will be better than the blank uncertainty of hearing nothing. For "courtesy" (l. 2) see *H.* ii. 58, *n.*

CANZONE IV.

From *V. N.* c. 23. We enter on a strain of higher mood. The tension implied in the last four Sonnets had ended in actual illness. The lover took to his bed, suffering severe pain for nine days; his mind wandered; there was the risk of a brain-fever. A cousin, or perhaps sister, young, fair, gentle, came and sat by his side, weeping as he called on death

And other ladies, who did me perceive,
 Through her who mingled thus her grief with mine,
 Bade her elsewhere incline,
 And then approached me so that I might hear. 10
 This said, "Sleep thou not here."
 Another, "Wherefore doth thy soul thus grieve?"
 Then rose I from that new-born fantasy,
 And on my Lady's name was fain to cry.

So sorrowful and sad my voice became, 15
 And broken so with anguish and with woe,
 That I alone the name heard in my heart;
 And with my face suffused, with blush of shame
 Which over all my features 'gan to flow,
 Love made me turn to them, nor stand apart. 20
 Such pallid hue my countenance then bore,
 It made them speak of me as one half-dead,
 "Come, let us comfort shed."
 One prayed another in deep lowliness;
 And thus would questions press: 25
 "What hast thou seen that thou art strong no more?"
 And when some comfort o'er my soul was spread,
 "Dear ladies, I will tell you all," I said.

While with sad thoughts my frail life I did weigh,
 And dwelt upon its days so short and few, 30
 Love wept within my heart which is his home:
 Wherefore my spirit went so far astray,
 That sighing through my heart the whisper flew,
 "E'en to my Lady death will surely come."
 Then did my soul in such strange wanderings roam, 35

to end his sorrows. Other ladies followed, and bade her leave him. What came next the Canzone records, the mind at last finding power and leisure to make a psychological study of its own delirium. He notes (l. 14) that he would not audibly utter Beatrice's name.

¹⁸ In the first anguish of that delirium Dante had called on death (l. 3). The questions of his visitors rouse him, and he calls on Beatrice, but the cry is still inaudible. They gaze alarmed at his sudden flush and equally sudden pallor. "What has caused it?"

²⁴ Many readers will remember Wordsworth's unconscious parallelism—

" 'Ah mercy!' to myself I cried,
 'If Lucy should be dead!'"

Not many months had passed before the prophecy was fulfilled. Was this, too, among Dante's morning dreams? (*H.* xxvi. 7; *Purg.* ix. 16). With that foreboding of his lady's death there came a like anticipation of his own.

I closed mine eyes beneath their sorrow's weight ;

And so disconsolate

Were all my senses that each failed and fled.

And then by fancy led

Beyond all knowledge, where Truth's voice is dumb, 40

Fair ladies' faces sorrowing met mine eye,

Who said to me : 'Thou too shalt die, shalt die.'"

"Then saw I many things that made me muse

In that vain dream wherein I then was led.

I deemed I found myself I know not where, 45

And saw fair dames pass by with tresses loose.

One sobbed for grief ; another salt tears shed,

All darted fire of sorrow and despair.

Then step by step it seemed that I saw there

The sun grow dark, and stars begin to peep, 50

And that with these did weep :

The birds fell down as they their flight did take ;

The earth began to quake ;

And one came saying, hoarse and full of care :

'What, know'st thou not our news of sorrow deep ? 55

Thy Lady, once so fair, in death doth sleep.'"

"Then lifting up mine eyes all bathed in woe,

Angels I saw, who seemed a rain of manna,

And turning, upwards winged to Heaven their flight ;

And a small cloud in front of them did go ; 60

And all behind it went and cried 'Hosanna.'

Had they said more I would have told you right ;

Then Love said, 'I'll not hide it from thy sight ;

Come see thy Lady as she there doth lie.'

Then dream-like phantasy 65

Led me upon my lady dead to look,

And as a glance I took,

Fair dames were wrapping her in cere-cloth white ;

And with her was such true humility,

It seemed as though she said, "In peace am I." 70

⁴⁰ As in *S. viii.*, the echoes of the cries of the Sicilian Vespers are still ringing in his ears (*Par. viii.* 75), and they seem spoken to him.

⁴⁵ The vision of Beatrice's funeral comes before him, and the whole world is darkened.

⁵⁵ The transfiguration, one might almost say the apotheosis, of Beatrice coincides not with her actual death, but with the first vision of it. We have an anticipation of her glory

And said: "In honouring me do now thy part," 5
 And at each word he still to smile was fain.
 And as my Lord and I some time apart
 Stood, looking thither whence he came, full plain,
 I Lady Vanna, Lady Bice, saw
 Come nigh towards the spot where I stood there, 10
 One close upon the other miracle;
 And e'en as now my thoughts true record draw,
 Love said to me, "This is the Springtide fair,
 And Love, the other's name, let likeness tell."

SONNET XVII.

"BEATRICE, GOD'S TRUE PRAISE."

Tanto gentile e tanto onesta pare.

So gentle and so fair she seems to be,
 My Lady, when she others doth salute,
 That every tongue becomes, all trembling, mute,
 And every eye is half afraid to see;
 She goes her way and hears men's praises free, 5
 Clothed in a garb of kindness, meek and low,
 And seems as if from heaven she came, to show
 Upon the earth a wondrous mystery.
 To one who looks on her she seems so kind,
 That through the eyes a sweetness fills the heart, 10
 Which only he can know who doth it try.
 And through her face there breatheth from her mind
 A spirit sweet and full of Love's true art,
 Which to the soul saith, as it cometh, "Sigh."

SONNET XVII.

From *V. N. c. 26*. Hitherto the lover had spoken chiefly of the impression made by Beatrice on himself. Now his words take a wider range. He will tell of the impression made on others. Whatever allowance we make for the hyperboles of love, the Sonnet may be received as evidence that Dante was not alone in his admiration, that Beatrice left on all her friends—and her father's and her husband's position probably brought all the notables of Florence, its men of culture and wealth and rank, within her circle—the impression of an angel-like perfection. In her presence the strife of tongues ceased, and the mockers were hushed into a reverential silence by that stainless purity. Spenser's Una, in the region of imagination, the devout and "gracious" Lady Margaret Maynard, who was Ken's Beatrice (s. on *Parg.* xxi. 22) in that of reality, supply suggestive parallels. Some of us may have known, in the quiet life of Hurstmonceaux Rectory, one who left a like impression on those who came in contact with her—not to enter on the inner circle of her home-life—from Arthur

SONNET XVIII.

THE BEAUTY OF HOLINESS.

Vede perfettamente ogni salute.

HE sees completely fullest bliss about
 Who among ladies sees my Lady's face ;
 Those that with her do go are surely bound
 To give God thanks for such exceeding grace.
 And in her beauty such strange might is found,
 That envy finds in other hearts no place ;
 So she makes them walk with her, clothed all round
 With love and faith and courteous gentleness.
 The sight of her makes all things lowly be ;
 Nor of herself alone she gives delight,
 But each through her receiveth honour due.
 And in her acts is such great courtesy,
 That none can recollect that wondrous sight,
 Who sighs not for it in Love's sweetness true.

SONNET XIX.

ALL SAINTS' DAY, 1289.

Di donne io vidi una gentile schiera.

I SAW a band of gentle dames pass by,
 Upon the morn of this last All Saints' Day,
 And one came on, as chief in dignity,
 And on her right hand Love himself did stay.

Stanley, Archbishop Trench, and Cardinal Manning, to John Sterling, Walter Savage Landor, and George Eliot. "Face" for "*labbia*" is justified (l. 12) by *H.* vii. 7; *Purg.* xxiii. 47.

SONNET XVIII.

The influence of the angelic presence is pursued still further. Her companions are, as it were, radiant with her reflected light, and are better for her presence. The woman whom many men admire, who makes many "conquests," is seldom a favourite with her own sex. With Beatrice it was otherwise, and men and women alike loved and revered her.

SONNET XIX.

Not in the *V. N.* It was probably the last All-Saints' Day (Nov. 1, 1289) of Beatrice's life. We see her as she went with a company of friends to the *festa*, probably in the Church of Ognissanti, Dante watching them, seeking to catch the "*salute*," which was his *salute* (in the Italian the word in its twofold sense rhymes with itself), and made him braver and truer than it found him. The day was one much to be remembered, all the more so when Beatrice herself was numbered with the saints.

A ray of light she darted from her eye, 5
 Which, like a burning spirit, made its way :
 And I, such boldness had I, could descry
 Her features fair an angel's face display.
 To him who worthy was she greeting gave
 With her bright eyes, that Lady good and kind, 10
 Filling the heart of each with valour brave.
 In heaven I deem that she her birth did find,
 And came upon the earth us men to save,
 And blest is she who follows close behind.

 BALLATA V.

DAWNING OF NEW HOPE.

Deh Nuvoletta, che in ombra d' Amore.

AN Cloud, that, in Love's shadow sweeping past,
 Hast suddenly appeared before mine eyes,
 Have pity on the heart which wounded lies,
 Which hopes in thee, yet, yearning, dies at last.
 Thou Cloud, in beauty more than human seen, 5
 A fire hast kindled in my inmost heart,
 With speech of thine that slays ;

Then, with a glowing spirit's act and art,
 Thou genderest hope, which doth to healing lean,
 When I on thy smile gaze. 10
 Ah, seek not why a new trust it doth raise,
 But on my yearning look, whose fire is strong ;
 Ere now a thousand dames, through tarrying long,
 Have felt on them the grief of others cast.

13 Comp. *S.* xvii. 7.

BALLATA V.

In the vision of *Conv.* iv. 60, the soul of Beatrice had been seen rising to heaven as in a cloud (comp. *H.* xxvi. 37 ; *Purg.* xxx. 28), and that thought is the starting-point of the present poem. Here, as in *Sonn.* iii. and xvi., she is identified with Love himself. That vision of glory haunts him. The words that fall from it pierce his soul, yet they bring hope, and therefore, like the spear of the Greek hero, heal as well as smite.

- SONNET XX.

CREDENTIALS WITHDRAWN.

O dolei rime, che parlando andate.

DEAR rhymes, who, as ye go, hold converse sweet
 Of that fair dame who wins for others praise :
 To you will come, perhaps with you now stays,
 One ye will doubtless as your brother greet.
 I, that ye list not to him, you entreat, 5
 By that Lord who in ladies love doth raise ;
 For in his utterance dwelleth there always
 A thing that is for Truth no comrade meet.
 And if ye should be moved by words of his
 To seek her presence whom as yours ye own, 10
 Stay not your steps, but to her feet draw nigher,
 And say, "O Lady, we have thus come on
 To speak for one who all his joy doth miss,
 Saying, 'Where is she whom my fond eyes desire?'"

SONNET XXI.

REPULSION AND ATTRACTION.

Dagli occhi della mia donna si muove.

FROM my dear Lady's eyes a light doth gleam,
 So clear and noble that, where it doth shine,
 Things are revealed no artist can define,
 Lofty and strange beyond all fancy's dream.

SONNET XX.

Not in the *V. N.* The drift is so far clear that we see at once that the Sonnet is of the nature of a recantation. The poems which represent the lover's true self are not to admit one which will come as claiming to be of their company. He is not a faithful messenger, does not speak the poet's true mind. I surmise that *Sonn.* vii., with its tone of somewhat petulant complaint, may have been that which Dante sought to disclaim.

SONNET XXI.

No interest of circumstance, not much perhaps of any kind, attaches to what is but one of the variations on the lover's ever-recurring theme. *S.* viii. and *S.* xi. may be compared with it, as illustrating the subtle skill and delicacy of such variations. Its vagueness, and that of *S.* xxii. may perhaps be connected with the fact that they were written ostensibly for the "screen" lady of *V. N.* c. 5.

And from their rays upon my heart doth stream 5
 Such fear, it thrills through all my nerves and brain,
 And I say, "Here I will not turn again."
 But soon my fixed resolves abandoned seem ;
 And there I turn whence cometh my dismay,
 To find some comfort for my timorous eyes, 10
 Which erst that might and majesty did own :
 When I arrive, ah me ! their vision dies,
 And the desire which led them fades away ;
 Wherefore let Love's care for my state be shown.

 SONNET XXII.

THE MOTHE AND THE CANDLE.

Io son sì vago della bella luce.

I AM so eager for the beauteous light
 Of those fair traitor eyes that me have slain,
 That thither, whence I have my scorn and pain,
 I am led back by that my great delight :
 And that which clear, or less clear, meets my sight, 5
 So dazzles both my soul's and body's eye
 That, both from thought and virtue parted, I
 Follow desire alone as leader right.
 And he doth lead me on, so full of trust,
 To pleasant death by pleasant fraud brought on, 10
 I only know it when the harm is done.
 And much I grieve for grief that scorn hath won,
 But most I murmur, ah ! for so I must,
 That pity too is robbed of guerdon just.

SONNET XXII.

The authorship has been assigned to Dante's friend Cino da Pistoia, but it is received Dante's own by *Frat.*, *Witt.*, and others. Internal evidence is, I think, in its favour.

CANZONE V.

"THE FEAR OF DEATH IS FALLEN UPON ME."

Morte, poich' io non truovo a cui mi doglia.

DEATH, since I find not one who with me grieves,
 None in whom pity for me moveth sighs,
 Where turn mine eyes, or wheresoe'er I stay.
 And since that thou art he who me bereaves
 Of all my strength, and robes in miseries, 5
 Till on me rise misfortune's blackest day;
 Since thou, O Death, canst, as thy will may sway,
 Make my life rich, or plunge in poverty,
 'Tis meet that I should turn my face to thee,
 Portrayed like face where Death paints every line; 10
 To thee, as piteous friend, I make my way,
 Wailing, O Death, that sweet tranquillity
 Thy stroke takes from me, if it robbeth me
 Of that fair dame who with her heart bears mine,
 Who of all good is portal true and shrine. 15

Death, what may be the peace thou tak'st from me,
 Bewailing which to thee in tears I come,
 Of this I'm dumb; for thou canst see it well,
 If thou mine eyes all wet with weeping see,
 Or see the grief that in them finds its home, 20
 Or see the doom, of death so visible.
 Ah, if fear now with strokes so keen and fell
 Hath thus dealt with me, what will anguish do,
 If I see Death her eyes' clear light subdue,
 That wont to be to mine so sweet a guide! 25
 That thou dost seek mine end I clearly tell,
 Great joy to thee from my woe will accrue:
 For much I fear, as feeling that dread spell,
 Lest, that I might by lesser grief be tried,
 I should seek death, and none would death provide. 30

CANZONE V.

Not in the *V. N.* We are left in no room for doubt as to the date and occasion of this *Canzone*. It was obviously written in the early days of June 1290, when Beatrice was hovering between life and death. The prophetic vision of *Cans. iv.* was nearing its fulfilment, and the poet turns to Death with an appeal for pity, asking, if it may be, for some short

Death, if thou smite this gentle lady fair,
 Whose supreme virtue to the intellect
 Shows as perfect what in her we may view,
 Virtue thou driv'st to exile and despair,
 Thou tak'st from grace the home that doth protect, 35
 And high effect dost rob of honour due ;
 Thou wreckest all her beauteous form and hue,
 Which shines with more of good than others shine,
 As that must needs do which brings light divine
 From heaven in form of creature worthiest.
 Thou break'st and crushest all the good faith true 40
 Of that truth-loving Love who guides her right ;
 If thou, O Death, dost quench her lovely light,
 Love may well say where'er his sway doth rest,
 "Lo ! I have lost my banner, fairest, best."

Death, grieve thou now for that exceeding ill, 45
 So sure to follow if my loved One dies ;
 Which all men's eyes as greatest woe will own.
 Slacken thy bow that in it linger still
 The arrow that upon the string yet lies,
 Which thou dost poise, its aim her heart alone ; 50
 For pity's sake, look to it ere 'tis done.
 Curb thou a little while thine uncurbed rage,
 Now stirred against her life thy war to wage,
 To whom God giveth such exceeding grace.
 Ah ! Death, if thou hast pity, be it shown 55
 Without delay. I see Heaven's heritage
 Open ; God's angels to our lower stage
 Descend, to bear that blest soul to the place
 Where hymn and song do honour to her grace.

Canzon', thou see'st how subtle is the thread, 60
 On which doth hang my hopes that slender be,
 How strength doth flee without my Lady fair.
 Wherefore, I pray thee, softly, gently tread,
 My little song, nor slack to ope thy plea,

respite ere the angels gain their wish (*Canz.* ii. 15-23). Line 56 shows that the apotheosis of Beatrice is still the dominant thought in her lover's mind. It is suggestive that the Canzone is found in a Breslau MS. prefixed to the *Commedia* by way of introduction.

For upon thee dependeth all my prayer, 65
 And, with that lowly mien thou'rt wont to bear,
 Seek thou Death's presence now, my little song,
 That thou may'st shatter fierce wrath's portals strong,
 And gain the meed of worthy fruits of love :
 And if by thee he may be moved to spare 70
 That doom of death, take heed thou stay not long
 To bear thy comfort for my Lady's wrong,
 So that to this our world she bounteous prove,
 That gentle Soul, for whom I live and move.

STANZA.

SIGHS FOR BEATRICE'S GREETING.

Si lungamente m' ha tenuto Amore.

So long have I been prisoner held by Love,
 And thus trained to endure his sovereignty,
 That as, before, he harsh was found to me,
 So now he stays, my heart's sweet guest to prove.
 Wherefore, when he my courage doth remove, 5
 So that my spirits seem far off to flee,
 Such sense of sweetness then comes over me,
 That my frail soul with pallid face doth rove.
 O'er me then Love such mastery doth show,
 He sets my sighs afloat, with speech endowed ; 10
 And they cry out aloud
 On my dear Lady, greeting to bestow.
 This happens whensoever she looks on me,
 So lowly, passing all belief, is she.

STANZA.

From the *V. N.* c. 28. Not a Sonnet, though it commonly appears with that title, but rather, as Dante himself tells, the first verse of a *Canzone* which was interrupted by the death of Beatrice, and the burden of which was the lover's desire for the greeting which, for some cause, possibly the illness which ended fatally, he had missed. For us the fragment has the interest of giving the last lines written to the living Beatrice.

CANZONE VI.

BEATRICE IN PARADISE.

Gli occhi dolenti per pietà del core.

My sorrowing eyes, through pity for my mind,
 Have through their weeping suffered pain so great,
 That now they stop, their tears all spent and gone;
 Whence, if an opening I for grief would find
 That leads me, step by step, to Death's estate,
 Needs must I speak with many a sigh and groan.
 And since I call to mind that I was known
 Of my dear Lady, while she lived, to tell,
 Ye gentle ladies, willingly with you,
 I seek not hearers new,
 But to the kind hearts that in ladies dwell
 Will I now speak, while tears my cheeks bedew,
 Since she hath gone to Heaven thus suddenly,
 And leaves Love mourning in my company.

Into high Heaven hath Beatrice passed,
 That kingdom where the angels find their peace,
 And dwells with them; from you, fair dames, doth fly.
 It was not spell of cold that killed at last,
 Nor that of heat, that other lives bids cease,

CANZONE VI.

1-3 (From *P. N. c. 32*). The blow has at last fallen, and we can understand from *Cans. v.* what its first effect must have been. Critics who cannot "fathom" the "poet's mind," and therefore "wax" it with their "shallow wit," have made merry over the letter beginning with the words of *Law. i. 1*, which the young lover addressed to "all the princes of the land." Give these words their true meaning, "to all the chief men of Florence," and I cannot see anything in the act so supremely ridiculous. Tennyson's *In Memoriam* has taught us how a perfectly sane poet may take the whole world into the sanctuary of a buried friendship. Was it strange that Dante should address an *In Memoriam* letter, afterwards expanded into such a *Canzone* as this, to the many who had shared his reverence and admiration for Beatrice, even as he had addressed the Sonnet which had told of the new beginning of his New Life to his brother poets? Of the circumstances of her death (June 9, 1290) we know but little, but that little is suggestive. It was no common consumption or fever (*Il. 18, 19*). Had she faded away under the pressure of a loveless and joyless marriage with a man older than herself, who left her alone in Florence while he was occupied with the foreign business of his firm in France or England? (*Par. xv. 121-2*.) Something she had said on her death-bed which Dante could not repeat without egotism (*P. N. c. 29*). Had she left a dying message that she, at least, had understood him, appreciated him, loved him, as far as the wife of another might love? Had she bidden him cherish the memory of that love as the safeguard of his faith and purity? This is, at least, the natural inference, and *Par. xxx. 103-145* goes far to confirm it. We, at all events, may note at every step prophetic anticipations of all that is most glorious in the *Commedia*.

1-14 The lover turns for sympathy to those who are mourners like himself, to whom he has before spoken of his passion (*Cans. ii.*)

14 Comp. *Par.*

15 The lines, as noted above, are sufficiently suggestive.

But her own great and sweet benignity ; 20
 For the clear light of her humility
 Passed into heaven with such exceeding power
 It roused great wonder in the Eternal Sire,
 So that a sweet desire
 Came on Him to call hence so bright a flower, 25
 And bade her pass from earth and mount up higher,
 Because He saw this troublous life of care
 Was all unworthy of a thing so fair.

Now hath the gentle spirit ta'en its flight,
 From her fair form, so full of sweetest grace, 30
 And she shines glorious in a worthy home.
 Who speaks of her, and doth not weep outright,
 Hath heart of stone so evil and so base,
 That into it no spirit kind can come.
 No villain heart by skill of thought can sum 35
 The measure of her excellence complete,
 And thence it is he hath no will to weep ;
 But he great woe doth keep,
 And grief and sighs that fain for death entreat,
 And from his soul all consolation sweep, 40
 Who in his thoughts doth sometimes contemplate
 What she was like, and what hath been her fate.

My many sighs work in me anguish sore,
 When in my saddened mind my troubled thought
 Brings back her form, whose beauty pierced my heart ; 45
 And oftentimes, her death revolving o'er,
 There comes a longing with such sweetness fraught,
 It makes all colour from my face depart ;
 And such pain comes to me from every part
 When this imagination holds me fast, 50
 I shudder as I feel my misery ;
 And so transformed am I,
 That shame my lot apart from men has cast.
 Then weeping in my sore lament I cry
 On Beatrice, saying " Art thou dead ? " 55
 And as I call, by her I'm comforted.

²⁰ An echo of *Canz.* ii. 15-21.

⁵⁵ Comp. the "in dreams and other ways" of *Purg.* xxx. 134.

Tears of great grief and sighs of anguish keen
 Sore vex my heart, when I am found alone,
 That whosoe'er beheld it, 'twould distress :
 And what the tenor of my life hath been, 60
 Since my dear Lady that new world hath won,
 There is no tongue that could in full express.
 And therefore, ladies, not through will's full stress
 Could I to you what now I am declare ;
 Such travail sore my hard life works for me, 65
 So bowed in misery,
 Each seems to say, "I of thy life despair,"
 Seeing my cold lips death-pale with agony.
 But what I am my Lady sees full plain,
 And I still hope her pity to obtain. 70

Go on thy way, sad Canzon', weeping go,
 And find the ladies and the maidens fair,
 To whom thy sister songs were wont to bear
 Much joy in days gone by ;
 And thou, the daughter of great misery, 75
 Take thou thy place with them in thy despair.

SONNET XXIII.

GRIEF TOO DEEP FOR TEARS.

Venite a intender gli sospiri miei.

COME now, and listen ye to each sad sigh,
 O gentle hearts, for pity this doth pray ;
 Sighs that in deepest sorrow wend their way,
 And if they did not, I of grief should die.

⁶⁰ Looking on Beatrice as a saint, it was but natural that he should turn to her, trusting in her pity and intercession.

SONNET XXIII.

From *V. N. c. 33*. The history which is thus embodied is briefly told. Beatrice's brother, his dearest friend next to Guido Cavalcanti, came to him and asked him to write some verses on the death of a fair lady, not saying who she was. Dante, however, felt sure that it was for her he had lost, and wrote accordingly. As one point specially noticeable is the growing weariness of life in l. 12. One notes, as an instance of the possibilities of interpretation, the astounding conjecture (*Flothe*) that the friend who came to Dante was Beatrice's husband.

For now mine eyes are debtors still to cry 5
 More often far than with my will doth stay,
 Weeping, ah me! my Lady passed away,
 For weeping would assuage my misery.
 Ye will hear them call often on the name
 Of that my gentle Lady, who hath gone 10
 Into a world for her great virtue meet,
 And ofttimes scorn the life I now drag on,
 In likeness of a sorrowing spirit's frame,
 Deprived for ever of her greeting sweet.

CANZONE VII.

BEATRICE WITH THE ANGELS.

Quantunque volte (ahi lasso!) mi rimembra.

AH me! as often as I call to mind,
 That I shall never more
 See the fair Lady whom I wail and weep,
 So great an inward grief my heart doth find
 All gathered, heap on heap, 5
 That I say, "Soul, why dost thou not depart?
 For the keen torments that will vex thy heart
 In that world which to thee much woe hath brought,
 Fill me with saddest thoughts and anxious fear;"
 So I bid Death come near, 10
 As with a sweet and gentle quiet fraught,
 And say "O come to me," so lovingly,
 That I am envious of whome'er doth die.
 And in my sighs there comes and claims its part
 An utterance of great woe, 15
 That alway calls on Death in its despair.
 To him are turned all longings of my heart,
 Since she, my Lady fair,

CANZONE VII.

From *V. N. c.* 34. Written as a sequel to *S. xxiii.* That seemed to him, as he read it, inadequate for the occasion. With a curious self-analysis, he distinguishes between the first stanza as expressing the feelings of the brother, and the second as uttering his own. As one reads the *Canzone* it seems difficult to follow the distinction. He himself lays stress on the fact that the words "my Lady fair" occur only in the latter of the two stanzas. There also we may perhaps note the prominence of the apotheosis element which was so intensely personal. (*Comp. Purg. xxx. 28-75.*)

Felt of his cruel dart the deadly blow :
 Because the joys that from her beauty flow, 20
 Departing far away from mortal sight,
 Have grown to spirit's beauty perfected,
 Which through the heavens doth shed,
 Greeting the angels, Love and Love's clear light,
 And bids their subtle high intelligence 25
 With wonder gaze ; so great her excellence.

SONNET XXIV.¹

A YEAR AFTER.

Era venuta nella mente mia.

THAT gentle Lady came upon my thought
 For whom Love weeps of many tears a shower,
 Just at the point when his exceeding power
 Drew you to look at that which then I wrought.

SONNET XXIV.

From *V. N.* c. 35. Twelve months had passed since the great sorrow, and the *Conv.* ii. 2, 13, tells us something of Dante's inner history during them. He had turned for comfort, as a student-nature like his was likely to do, to philosophy, and in particular to Boethius, *De Consolatione Philosophia*, and Cicero, *De Amicitia*. The necessarily heathen character of the latter book and the absolutely non-Christian character of the former led him away from the truest and deepest source of consolation. He entered on what has been called the second stage of the Trilogy of his life, on the whole, one of a falling away from his first love, and perhaps also from his first purity (*Purg.* xxx. 115-145). Comp. vol. i. pp. lii.-lv. When the anniversary of the fatal day, however, came round, as he was sketching the form of an angel (this implies that he had turned to art studies also by way of relief, probably in company with Giotto under Cimabue), his work was interrupted by visitors, and then, when they had left him, the picture of the angel he had lost rose up before him, and his sorrow found vent in sighs.

As at first written, the first four lines ran thus—

“ That gentle lady in my thoughts did come,
 Who, for her noble and exceeding worth,
 Is placed by Him, the Lord of heaven and earth,
 In heaven of lowliness, the Virgin's home.”

Line 4 is interesting as anticipating *H.* ii. 94, and *Par.* xxxii. 9. One notes, I think, in the Sonnet as it stands, in spite of its infinite pathos, a certain falling off in loftiness of aspiration. Sorrow hardly seems to be doing its strengthening and ennobling work. Even the substituted four lines speak a more philosophical, but less devotional feeling than those of which they took the place. So in the last, he thinks of his Beatrice rather as a “supreme intellect” than as an angel or a saint.

¹ As the Sonnet stands in the *Vita Nuova* the first four lines run thus :—

That gentle Lady on my thoughts did come
 Who for her noble and exceeding worth
 Is placed by Him, the Lord Supreme of earth,
 In heaven of lowliness, our Mary's home.

Love, who to feel her presence there was brought, 5
 Woke up within my sad and troubled heart,
 And to my sighs said, "Up, and onward start."
 And so they took their way, with sorrow fraught.
 Weeping they issued forth from out my breast,
 With such a voice as often doth collect 10
 The tears of sorrow into mourning eyes.
 But those who struggled forth with most unrest,
 Went uttering still, "O noble intellect!
 A year hath passed since thou to heaven didst rise!"

SONNET XXV.

THE RELIEF OF TEARS.

Videro gli occhi miei quanta pietate.

MINE eyes beheld what pity deep and true
 Was in thy look and features manifest,
 When on those acts and mien thy glance did rest,
 Which sorrow in me often doth renew.
 Then I perceived how all thy thoughts did view 5
 The state of this my life so dark and drear,
 So that there sprang within my heart a fear
 Lest with mine eyes I should my weakness show;
 And I removed me from thee, feeling deep
 Within me, that my heart's sad tears would flow, 10
 Which in thy presence sweet their impulse found.
 Then in my sad soul did a cry resound,
 "Now with this lady dear that Love doth go,
 Who makes me thus to wend my way and weep."

SONNET XXV.

From *V. N. c. 36*. The poet was alone in his chamber, sad and lonely, when he looked out and saw a fair young face, pale as Beatrice had been, watching him with looks of pity. Some, *e.g.*, Sir Theodore Martin, have conjectured that it was Gemma Donati, whom he afterwards married, and have built up what one may call a Dante-Grandison romance. Pity grows into love. He tells Gemma his story, asks her to accept his hand and the "widowed heart" which can never be wholly hers, and so they are married. I cannot say that I think this even a probable conjecture. It would probably have been better for Dante's happiness had there been that foundation of sympathy in his marriage. Curiously enough, in the *Convito* he identifies the "gentle lady" with Philosophy, and hence a host of commentators, mostly those who reduce Beatrice to a shadowy symbol, have denied her any historical personality. I agree with Witte and Kraft that the theory of the *Convito* was an after-thought, with

SONNET XXVI.

SORROW FINDING SYMPATHY.

Color d' amore e di pietà sembianti.

LOVE's pallid hue and sorrow's signs of woe
 Never laid hold with such a wondrous might
 On lady fair, when looking on the sight
 Of lowly eyes and mournful tears that flow,
 As then on thine when first thou cam'st to know 5
 My face, where grief its record sad did write,
 So that through thee did on my mind alight,
 A thought which will, I fear, my heart o'erthrow.
 I cannot keep mine eyes, o'erspent with grief,
 From turning often upon thee their gaze, 10
 In the keen longing that they have to weep :
 And thou that wish to such a height dost raise
 That they are wasted, finding no relief,
 And yet thy presence tears from them doth keep.

SONNET XXVII.

THE WANDERINGS OF THE EYES.

L'amaro lagrimar che voi faceste.

"THE many bitter tears ye made me shed,
 O eyes of mine, so long a season's space,
 Made others look with wonder on my case,
 In this my grief, as ye have witnessed.

just so much foundation in fact as that, having begun to idealise Beatrice as representing Divine Wisdom, it seemed to him natural to identify the "gentle lady" with the human wisdom of his philosophical teachers. It seems to me simply impossible to read the *V. N.* and believe that either of the two was altogether a phantom of the brain, though in the crucible of his imagination they might be sublimated till they appeared so to others, and even to himself (comp. vol. i. p. lii.) I incline to the belief that the "gentle lady" is the "*Pargoletta*," the "girl of little price," of *Purg.* xxxi. 59, but do not assume that the affection passed beyond a so-called platonic sentimentalism, and believe that Beatrice's reproaches cover both the literal and the allegorical meaning.

SONNET XXVI.

From *V. N.* c. 37. The presence of the gentle lady recalled the paleness, the looks, and movements of Beatrice. They called tears to his eyes, and yet as long as he looked on her he could not weep. So when he came to allegorise, he may have seen in Philosophy a kind of sister-likeness—*qualis decet esse sororum*—to the higher wisdom of Theology. For "the hue of love" compare "*Palleat omnis amans, pallens color aptus amanti.*" Ovid, *Ars Amandi*, i. 799; and "*Tinctus viola pallor amantium*," Hor., *Od.* iii. 10, 14.

SONNET XXVII.

From *V. N.* c. 38. We have a phase of feeling which indicates that the first love is losing its power. It was wrong to forget the past, yet the present had its attractions, and, as they

But in you now oblivion soon were bred, 5
 Had I on my part been so caitiff base,
 Not from you all occasion to efface,
 Reminding you of her ye weep as dead.
 Your fickle wanderings cause me many a groan,
 And so alarm me, that in truth I dread 10
 The face of lady fair that looks on you.
 Never should ye our Lady who is dead
 Forget, till death claims you too as his own : "
 So speaks my heart, and thereat sighs anew.

SONNET XXVIII.

PITY AKIN TO LOVE.

Gentil pensiero, che parla di vui.

A GENTLE thought, which speaks to me of thee,
 Within me cometh oftentimes to stay,
 And doth of Love such sweet discourse display,
 It makes my heart with it in sympathy.
 My soul saith to my heart, " Who may this be, 5
 That to our mind comes comfort to convey,
 And hath in virtue such a potent sway
 That other thoughts from us afar must flee ? "
 The heart replies, " O soul so sorrowful,
 This is a spirit, new and young, of Love, 10
 Who brings before me all his fond desires :
 And all his life and all his virtue move
 From the fair eyes of her so pitiful,
 Who oft hath grieved o'er our consuming fires.

drew him to one who shared the memories of the past, was it not possible to reconcile the two ?

He represents himself in the prose of the *V. N.* as reproaching his eyes because they looked on the living form of the " lady of the window," instead of weeping for Beatrice, as they had done before.

SONNET XXVIII.

From *V. N.* c. 39. The new love is growing stronger, and is driving out the old. There is at least a drifting towards an entire transfer of affection. The Sonnet is, as he says in the *V. N.*, the outcome of a " battle of thought " between the soul (the higher reason) and the " heart," which yields to the passing emotions, and the consolations which the latter offers the former rejects as utterly vile and unworthy.

SONNET XXIX.

SIGHS AND THOUGHTS.

Lasso ! per forza de' molti sospiri.

AH me ! by reason of the many sighs,
 Which spring from thoughts that dwell within my heart,
 Mine eyes are spent, and lose their former art,
 To meet, with answering gaze, another's eyes,
 And so are changed that they appear in guise 5
 Of two desires, to weep and prove my woe ;
 And often they so mourn that Love doth show
 Round them the circles of my miseries.
 These thoughts and sighs I breathe into the air,
 Grow in my heart so full of grief and pain 10
 That Love grows faint as death for very woe ;
 Wherefore in their deep sorrow they complain,
 And have my Lady's sweet name written there,
 And many words that from her death do flow.

SONNET XXX.

PILGRIMS IN FLORENCE.

Deh peregrini, che pensosi andate.

YE pilgrims, who pass on with thoughtful mien,
 Musing, perchance, of things now far away,
 Take ye from such a distant land your way,
 As one may judge from what in you is seen ?

SONNET XXIX.

From *V. N.* c. 40. The spell of the enchantress was, however, broken. A vision, as he records, in which he saw at noonday the form of Beatrice arrayed in crimson, as he had seen her in the days of her childhood, probably one of those referred to in *Purg.* xxx. 134, recalled him to his first love. His eyes, as in *Conv.* iii. 9, are inflamed with weeping. In the Italian we have, in ll. 5 and 8, the suggestive rhymes *desiri* and *martiri*, as in *B.* iii. 8, 10 ; *S.* xxviii. 11, 14.

SONNET XXX.

From *V. N.* c. 41. Pilgrims were seen in the streets of Florence on their way to Rome to see the *sudarium* of St. Veronica, the *vera icon* of the face of Christ, which was exhibited annually at St. Peter's. See *Par.* xxxi. 104, n. With a subtle power, which we may almost call Shakespearean or Browning-like, Dante thinks how little he can think their thoughts, how little they can think his. Comp. *Purg.* viii. 1-9. We are reminded of the threefold "I think he thought that I thought" of *H.* xiii. 25. They pass by Beatrice's house, and little dream of all the memories of joys and sorrows that it has for him. What if he should tell them that Florence has lost her Beatrice, her blessedness, and that one, at least, still weeps for that loss ? If we connect this exhibition of the Veronica with the Jubilee, of which

For ye weep not, as ye pass on between 5
 The woeful city's streets in sad array,
 As they might do whose careless looks display
 That they know nought of all her anguish keen.
 But if ye will remain with wish to hear,
 My heart tells me in sooth with many a sigh, 10
 That, as ye leave it, ye will surely weep :
 She hath beheld her Beatrice die,
 And what a man may wish to say of her,
 Hath power the hearer's eyes in tears to steep.

SONNET XXXI.

BEATRICE TRANSFIGURED.

Oltre la spera, che più larga gira.

BEYOND the sphere that wheeleth widest round
 Passeth the sigh that issues from my heart ;
 New power of mind, that Love's might doth impart
 With tears to it, draws it to higher ground. 5
 When it the goal of all desire hath found,
 It sees a lady clothed with honour bright,
 And shineth so, that through that glorious light
 Clear visions for the pilgrim soul abound.
 It sees her such that when its tale it tells,
 I hear it not, it speaks so soft and low 10
 To the sad heart that bids it speak of her ;
 Yet that it speaks of that fair dame I know,
 Since on my Beatrice oft it dwells,
 So that I hear it well, O ladies dear.

it was one of the chief attractions, this would bring the close of the *Vita Nuova* to about the beginning of A.D. 1300, and so would form a link with the assumed date of the opening of the *Inferno*. There is no reason, however, to think that the Veronica was not shown at certain seasons every year. L. 6 gives us in *la citta dolente* a link with *H. i. 1.*

SONNET XXXI.

From *V. N. c. 42*, and the last poem in it. We are drawing near the threshold of the definite resolve, after yet another vision (the germ of that with which the *Commedia* opens ?), that he would say of Beatrice what had never yet been said of woman. The Sonnet, we are told, was written at the request of two noble ladies who admired his poems, and asked him to write something new for them. He accordingly wrote what follows, and sent it to them with *Sonnets xxiii. and xxx.*

¹ The "sphere" is the *primum mobile*, which includes all the eight spheres of mediæval astronomy. Beyond it is the Empyrean Heaven, the abode of God. There is the "goal of all desire," and there is Beatrice (*Conv. ii. 4*). The "pilgrim soul" of l. 10 seems to present a link with *S. xxx.*

CANZONE VIII.

PAIN OF SEPARATION.

Amor, dacchè convien pur ch' io mi doglia.

LOVE, since 'tis meet that I should tell my woe,
 That men may list to me,
 And show myself with all my manhood gone,
 Grant that I may content in weeping know ;
 So that my grief set free 5
 My words may utter, with my sense at one.
 Thou wilt st my death, and I consent thereon ;
 But who will pardon if I lack the art
 To tell my pain of heart ?
 Who will believe what now doth me constrain ? 10
 But if from thee fit words for grief are won,
 Grant, O my Lord, that, ere my life depart,
 That cruel fair one may not hear my pain,
 For, of my inward grief were she made ware,
 Sorrow would make her beauteous face less fair. 15

CANZONE VIII.

A great gap divides the poems of the *Vita Nuova* from those that follow, and date, meaning, occasion, become more and more (if that, indeed, be possible, looking to the wanderings of interpreters, even within that region) matters of conjecture. Often there is but scanty evidence of authorship. In the present instance we have two *data* connecting the *Canzone* with Dante's life. It was written when he was in exile (l. 78). It was a song of the mountains (61, 76), in the valley of the river on whose banks he had felt the power of love. All this points to the upper valley of the Arno, the Casentino district, which is described in *H.* xxx. 65, and *Purg.* v. 94, xiv. 43, and in which he found a temporary home with Alessandro da Romena during his wanderings (vol. i. p. lxxxiii.) A letter which Witte has brought to light (*Frat. O. M.* iii. 430) is probably connected with it. Dante writes *circa* 1309 from the Casentino to the Marquis Moroello Malaspina of the Lunigiana, to whom he is said to have dedicated his *Purgatorio*. He dwells on the fact that in that region he had found a lady whose manners and character had attracted him. Of her rank or parentage or fortune we know nothing. He says that he sends a poem with the letter which will explain his feelings more fully. This *Canzone* is conjecturally identified with that poem, and that would give *circa* 1309 as its date. One does not read it with any great satisfaction. I assume that a man like Dante would not write to tell a friend and patron like Moroello of the progress of a criminal intrigue, and that the attachment was therefore of the platonic type. On the other hand, Dante was now forty-four, and the sighs and piled-up agonies which were real at twenty seem at that age somewhat artificial. Even the platonic attachment seems to involve something like unfaithfulness to the memory of Beatrice, after the ideal conversion of 1300, and while he was actually writing the *Purgatorio*, as well as to poor Gemma, who was left in Florence. On the other hand, one should remember that Italian nature is not English; that Dante's loneliness of exile might well create a passionate longing for sympathy; that when he found one whose presence seemed to brighten the gloom of life, his thoughts would run naturally in the old grooves and find utterance after the old form. There would be a certain satisfaction in feeling that the fountains which had once flowed so freely were not dried up, even though there was more effort in drawing the buckets from the well. I do not care to submit the water so drawn to a minute analysis. Some allowance must be made, I believe, in that process for the allegorising tendency. The haughtiness and coldness of the Casentino lady would remind such a thinker as Dante of what had been said of Wisdom herself; that she at first is found unpleasant to the unlearned (*Eccles.* vi. 20-28; *Covv.* iii. 15), and reserves the joy of her countenance for those who seek her with a persevering love.

I cannot 'scape from her, but she will come
 Within my phantasy,
 More than I can the thought that brings her there :
 The frenzied soul that brings its own ill home,
 Painting her faithfully, 20
 Lovely and stern, its own doom doth prepare :
 Then looks on her, and when it filled doth fare
 With the great longing springing from mine eyes,
 Wroth with itself doth rise,
 That lit the fire where it, poor soul ! doth burn. 25
 What plea of reason calms the stormy air
 When such a tempest whirls o'er inward skies ?
 The grief it cannot hold breaks forth in sighs,
 From out my lips that others too may learn,
 And gives mine eyes the tears they truly earn. 30

The image of my fair foe which doth stay
 Victorious and proud,
 And lords it o'er my faculty of will,
 Desirous of itself, doth make me stray
 There, where its truth is showed, 35
 As like to like its course directing still.
 Like snow that seeks the sun, so fare I ill ;
 But I am powerless, and I am as they
 Who thither take their way
 As others bid, where they must fall as dead. 40
 When I draw near, a voice mine ears doth fill,
 Which saith : " Away ! seek'st thou his death to see ? "
 Then look I out, and search to whom to flee
 For succour :—to this pass I now am led
 By those bright eyes that baleful lustre shed. 45

What I become when smitten, thus, O Love,
 Thou can'st relate, not I ;
 For thou dost stay to look while I lie dead,
 And if my soul back to my heart should move,
 Blind loss of memory 50
 Hath been with her while she from earth hath fled.
 When I rise up, and see the wound that bled,

And cast me down sore smitten by the blow,
 No comfort can I know,
 To keep me from the shuddering thrill of fear ; 55
 And then my looks, with pallor o'er them spread,
 Show what that lightning was that laid me low.
 For, grant it came with sweet smile all aglow,
 Long time all clouded doth my face appear,
 Because my spirit gains no safety clear. 60

Thus thou hast brought me, Love, to Alpine vale,
 Where flows the river bright,
 Along whose banks thou still o'er me dost reign.
 Alive or dead thou dost at will assail,
 Thanks to the fierce keen light, 65
 Which flashing opes the way for Death's campaign.
 Alas ! for ladies fair I look in vain,
 Or kindly men, to pity my deep woe.
 If she unheeding go,
 I have no hope that others help will send. 70
 And she, no longer bound to thy domain,
 Cares not, O Sire, for dart that thou dost throw ;
 Such shield of pride around her breast doth go,
 That every dart thereon its course doth end ;
 And thus her heart against them doth defend. 75

Dear mountain song of mine, thou goest thy way,
 Perchance thou'lt Florence see, mine own dear land,
 That drives me doomed and banned,
 Showing no pity, and devoid of love.
 If thou dost enter there, pass on, and say, 80
 " My lord no more against you can wage war,
 There, whence I come, his chains so heavy are,
 That, though thy fierce wrath placable should prove,
 No longer freedom hath he thence to move."

⁶¹ I have given above what seems the true explanation of the words. Local ambitions have, however, led some Italian scholars to identify the Alps with the mountains of the Lago di Garda, and the river with the Adige. (Comp. *H.* xii. 5.)

CANZONE IX.

THE LOVER'S THREATS.

Così nel mio parlar voglio esser aspro.

FAIN in my speech would I be harsh and rough,
 As is in all her acts that rock so fair,
 Which hourly comes to share
 More hardness, and less penetrable stuff,
 And clothes itself all o'er with jasper bright, 5
 So that, as stopped by it or halting there,
 No arrow forth doth fare,
 That ever on unsheltered part doth light:
 And shield and hauberk fail when she doth smite,
 Nor can a man escape those deadly blows, 10
 Which come upon her foes,
 As if with wings, and crush each strong defence;
 So to resist her I make no pretence.

I find no shield that she cannot break through,
 No place that hides me from her piercing eyes; 15
 But as o'er spray doth rise
 The blossom, so my mind with her is crowned;
 She seems as much to care for all my woe,
 As ship for sea that calm and waveless lies;
 My deep-sunk grief defies 20

CANZONE IX.

I own that I insert this *Canzone* with grave misgivings as to its authorship. It is true that it appears in all printed editions, is found with Dante's name in many MSS., and is accepted by experts like Fraticelli and Witte. On the other hand, I fail to find in it the grace, the subtlety, the pathos of the heart and hand of Dante. The threats of ll. 67-79, have a wild sensual Swinburnian eagerness of passion in them, of which we find no trace in Dante's other writings. I am disposed to couple it with another poem, an auctioneer's inventory of beauties, dealing largely with "blond and curled locks" "*Io miro i crespi e gli biondi capelli*," which was at one time, at Venice in 1508, printed as Dante's, and out of which an Italian scholar (Missirini) constructed an ideal portrait of Beatrice, but which is now generally assigned to Fazio degli Uberti, or some other second or third class poet. Witte, it may be noted, is disposed to find an allegorical meaning, like that which pervades the poetry of the Persian mystics and the mediæval interpretation of the *Song of Solomon*, in the threats of which I have spoken, and in which he sees the struggles of the intellect to attain the fruition of truth by its own persistent efforts—efforts which the seeker afterwards renounced for the submission of faith and hope. On the assumption of a literal meaning, commentators, seeing that a reference to Beatrice is out of the question, have identified the fair one to whom the *Canzone* is addressed with the Gentucca of *Purg.* xxiv. 38, or the Casentino lady of the *Ep.* to Morcello Malaspina, or to a Pietra de' Scrovigni of Padua, the last conjecture resting on the paronomasia of l. 2. Comp. vol. i. p. cxvii.

The allusion to Dido (p. 37) is almost the one point of contact with anything that we know of Dante's thoughts and studies (*H.* v. 85), but it is scarcely conclusive as evidence of authorship.

All power of utterance that in rhymes is bound.
 Ah, cruel pain, that, like sharp file, hast ground,
 So silently, my strength of life away,

Why hast thou no dismay
 Thus to devour my whole heart, bit by bit, 25
 As I to tell who gives thee strength for it.

For more my heart doth tremble, musing much
 Of her, where I meet gaze of other eyes,
 For fear lest no disguise 30
 Should keep my thoughts from being by look betrayed,
 Than I from death do shrink, when he, with touch
 Of Love's sharp teeth, doth every sense surprise :

Whence weak and prostrate lies
 My mind's whole strength, all dull and laggard made. 35
 Low hath he smitten me now, and hath displayed
 The sword that Dido slew all ruthlessly,
 E'en Love, to whom I cry,
 Calling for mercy in my lowly prayer ;
 And he denies, and leaves me to despair. 40

Once and again he lifts his hand to smite,
 That cruel Lord, and all hope passeth by ;
 So that I prostrate lie
 Upon the earth, of power to stir bereft.
 Then in my mind new troubles rise in might, 45
 And all the blood, which through my veins doth fly,

As hearing my heart's cry,
 Flows thitherward, and thus I pale am left.
 And on the left side I by him am cleft,
 So sorely that my whole heart throbs with pain. 50

Then say I, "Once again
 Should he lift hand, Death will have gained his prey
 Before the fatal blow descends to slay."

Had I thus seen him cleave the heart in twain
 Of that harsh Fair who cleaves my heart in four, 55
 Death would be dark no more,
 To whom I pass for her great beauty's sake.
 For in the sun as well as in the rain

That ruthless deadly fair her scorn doth pour.

Ah, why wails she no more

For me, as I for her in fiery lake?

For soon I'd cry, "I will not thee forsake."

Gladly I'd do it, as though he I were

Who, in those ringlets fair,

Which Love for my undoing crimps with gold,

Should plunge his hand, and revel in their hold.

And if I had those tresses in my hand,

Which are as rod or scourge that makes me mourn,

I would grasp them at morn,

And hold them till the bells of evensong.

Nor would I piteous be, nor gently bland,

But, like a bear at play, act out my scorn;

And if by Love's scourge torn,

For vengeance thousand-fold should I be strong;

And on her bright eyes, whence the flashes throng

That set on fire the heart I bear half-slain,

I would my fixed glance strain,

To 'venge me for the flight that wrought my pain,

And then with Love would grant her peace again.

Canzon', go straight to that my Lady fair

Who hath my heart so pierced, and takes by wrong

That for which most I long;

And with thine arrow at her proud heart aim,

For in such vengeance win we chiefest fame.

SONNET XXXII.

THE LOVER'S ANATHEMA.

Io maledico il dì ch' io vidi in prima.

I CURSE the day when first I saw the light

Of thy bright eyes so treacherously fair,

SONNET XXXII.

In some early collections the Sonnet appears with the name of Cino da Pistoia, to whom I am myself disposed to assign it. If Dante's, it must be referred to some pang of disappointment at the rejection of his affection by the lady of the Casentino or Pietra de' Scrovigni. See *Cans.* viii. and ix. I scarcely see how an allegorical meaning can be read between the

The hour when thou didst come upon the height
 Of this my heart to call my soul elsewhere ;
 Love's filing tool with curse I also smite, 5
 Which smoothed my songs, and colours rich and rare,
 That I have found for thee, and rhymed aright,
 So that the world to thee its praise might bear.
 And I curse too my memory hard as steel,
 So firm to keep what bringeth death to me, 10
 That is, thy looks which grace and guilt reveal,
 Through which Love oft is led to perjury ;
 So that at him and me men's laugh rings free,
 As though I would rob Fortune of her wheel.

BALLATA VI.

IGNORANCE IN ASKING.

Donne, io non so di che mi preghi Amore.

LADIES, I know not what of Love to pray,
 For he smites me, and death is hard to bear,
 And yet to feel him less brings greater fear.

 There shineth in the centre of my mind
 The light of those fair eyes that I desire, 5
 Which gives my soul content ;
 True is it that at times a dart I find
 Which drieth up my heart's well as with fire,
 Ere all its force be spent ;
 This doeth Love as oft as he doth paint 10
 That gentle hand and that pure faithfulness,
 Which should my life with sense of safety bless.

lines. An anathema on the earthly philosophy which he was leaving for a higher wisdom is perhaps conceivable, but is not, I think, probable.

* The words present an almost verbal coincidence with *S.* xlii. 1. For the "wheel of fortune" see *H.* vii. 96.

BALLATA VI.

Authorship, date, and occasion uncertain. The address to "Ladies" reminds us of some of the poems of the Beatrice period (*Cans.* ii. 1 ; *S.* xii. 1, xiv. 1). Line 8 finds a parallel in *H.* i. 20.

BALLATA VII.

MEMORIES.

Madonna, quel signor, che voi portate.

LADY, the sovrain Lord thou so dost bear
 In thy bright eyes, that he subdues all power,
 Of surety gives me dower,
 That thou with pity wilt full friendship share ;
 For there, where he doth find his home and bower 5
 And has society so passing fair,
 He draws what's good and rare
 To him, as to the fountain-head of power.
 Hence I find comfort for my hope, full store,
 Which hath so long been rent and tempest tost, 10
 That it had sure been lost,
 Had it not been that Love
 Against all adverse fortune help doth prove,
 With his bare look and with remembered lore
 Of the sweet spot and of the flowery grove, 15
 Which, with new hues, all hues of earth above,
 Encircleth all my mind and memory,
 Thanks to thy sweet and gracious courtesy.

BALLATA VIII.

THE GARLAND.

Per una ghirlandetta.

By reason of a garland fair
 That once I saw, each single flower
 Now makes me breathe a sigh.

BALLATA VII.

What has been said of *B. vi.* holds good of this also. Line 1 reads like a reproduction of *S. xi. 1.* It may have been one of the many "*cosette*" (*V. N. c. 5*) which he wrote for the "screen" lady between 1283 and 1285, of which Beatrice was the subject, but which he did not care to include in the *V. N.* Line 15 seems to find an echo in the vision of the earthly Paradise (*Purg. xxviii. 1-36*).

BALLATA VIII.

I incline to think that this also was addressed to Beatrice. Her lover sees her adorned with a wreath of flowers (comp. *Purg. xxx. 28*), crowned as by the Lord of love, and over her hovers the angel of love and lowliness.

I saw thee, Lady, bear that garland fair,
 Sweetest of flowers that blow, 5
 And over it, as floating in the air
 I saw Love's angel hover meek and low,
 And in his song's sweet flow,
 He said, "Who looks on me
 Will praise my Lord on high." 10

Should I be haply where a floweret blows,
 A sigh must I suspire,
 And say, "Where'er my gentle lady goes,
 Her brow doth bear the flowerets of my Sire :
 But to increase desire, 15
 My Lady sure will be
 Crowned by Love's majesty.

My slender words a tale of flowers have told
 In ballad quaint and new ;
 And for their brightness they a garment fold, 20
 Not such as others knew.
 Therefore I pray to you,
 That, when one sings it, ye
 Should shew it courtesy.

SONNET XXXIII.

LOVE'S SOVEREIGNTY.

Io sono stato con Amore insieme.

I HAVE with Love in contact close been thrown,
 From the ninth year the sun did mark for me,
 And know how he now curb, now spur may be,
 And how beneath him men may smile and groan.

SONNET XXXIII.

Here we stand on somewhat surer ground. A Sonnet is extant written by Cino da Pistoia to Dante, asking whether one who had loved truly and passionately could ever come under the power of a like love again. To that question this Sonnet is the affirmative answer. It maintains that love comes on us, mastering our freewill, and leaving us no choice but to obey, and so far agrees in tone with the letter about the Casentino lady (*EA*. 3) before referred to. It may be, as Fraticelli conjectures, the Sonnet alluded to in the letter, "*exulanti Pistoriens*" (probably Cino), dealing with the same question (*Frat. O. M.* iii. 434). Cecco d'Ascoli refers to it, quoting the first line in his *Acerba*, iii. 1. Neither Krafft nor Witte, it may be noted, admit it in the editions they have severally published.

¹ For the fact see *V. N.* c. 1; for the form of statement, *Conv.* ii. 7.

Who strives with him, with skill and strength alone, 5
 Acts as he does who, when the storm plays free,
 Rings out a peal, as though the vaporous sea
 And thunderous strife that music could atone.
 Wherefore within the range of that his bow,
 Free choice to act hath not its freedom true, 10
 So that our counsels vain dart to and fro.
 Well with new spur in flank may he us prick,
 And each new pleasure he before us lays,
 We must needs follow, of the old joy sick.

Part II.

SONNET XXXIV.

THE ENVOY'S INSTRUCTIONS.

Parole mie, che per lo mondo vieta.

YE words of mine, whose voice the world doth fill,
 Who had your birth when first my thoughts began
 To speak of her for whom astray I ran ;
 "Ye, who the third heaven move, by force of will,"
 Knowing her well, to her your course fulfil, 5
 So wailing that she may our sorrows scan :
 Say to her, "We are thine, nor think we can
 Present ourselves henceforth more numerous still."

⁵ The words probably refer to the practice of ringing church bells during a thunderstorm. That, Dante says, in its impotence to stop the tempest, is like the powerlessness of the will when the storms of passion are rolling over it. It is his *apologia*, afterwards, we may believe, recanted (*Purg.* xxxi. 31-66), for the passing affections that obscured the memory of Beatrice. Here also, of course, an allegorical meaning is conceivable. For the custom see Brand's *Popular Antiquities*, ii. 217, 218; *ed.* 1875.

SONNET XXXIV.

The quotation in line 4 of *Canz.* xiv. 1 is conclusive as to authorship. The opening lines imply a consciousness of fame already widely spread, resting on the older sister poems of the *V. N.* The line quoted in line 4 is from the first of those explained allegorically in the *Convito*. The fact that it thus belongs to the second stage of Dante's Trilogy, of which the *Convito* is the embodiment, justifies its place as the opening of Part II. Line 3 implies, as I render "*in cui errai*" (the words have been taken, however, as "against whom I sinned"), an admission that he had sinned in thought, in not remembering the Divine Wisdom of which Beatrice had become the symbol. He bids these poems of Part II., now collected, go to the Philosophy, who, as the ideal object of his second love, is the subject of the *Convito*, and tells her that their number is complete. They cannot, however, hope to find in her reciprocity

Stay not with her; for Love is not found there,
 But take your way around in sad array,
 Like your own sisters in the days that were.
 And when ye find a lady kind and fair,
 Right humbly at her feet your tribute lay,
 And say, "To thee we gifts of honour bear."

10

SONNET XXXV.

FOR OTHERS' SAKE.

Chi guarderà giammai senza paura.

Who now will ever look devoid of fear
 Into this fair and tender maiden's eyes,
 Which so have wrought on me that now there lies
 Before me nought but death, to me so drear?
 See how my evil fortune is severe;
 For from all lives, my life the destinies
 Chose as the type of perilous emprise,
 That none to gaze on that fair face draw near.
 To me this end was given by Fortune's might;
 Since it must needs be that one man should die,
 That others to that peril come not nigh.
 Therefore, alas! thus drawn along was I,
 Attracting to me my life's opposite,
 As doth the pearl the star of day's clear light.

5

10

of affection, for she is passionless in her beauty. The Sonnet seems like a kind of *apologia* for the endeavour to combine the new teachings of Philosophy with the old reverence for Beatrice, an *apologia* of which *Purg.* xxx. 100-145 may be looked on as a recantation. The "sisters" are probably the poems of the *V. N.* The "lady kind and fair" (*donna di valore*) is identified in *Conv.* iii. 14 with any noble soul that sympathises with the pursuit of wisdom.

SONNET XXXV.

The allegorical sense is again dominant. He had loved the "fair maid" of whom he speaks (his use of the word "*pargoletta*" suggests that that term in *Purg.* xxxi. 59 has both a literal and a symbolic meaning) not wisely but too well. His long pursuit of philosophy had been exhausting and unsatisfying. His strength is failing, life seems waning. Let others take warning by his example, lest the attractions of her bright eyes, *i.e.* as in *Conv.* iii. 15, the demonstrations of Philosophy, draw them to a like peril of death. True life, he seems to say, is not found in that path. L. 10 seems an echo of *John* xi. 50.

¹⁴ The pearl was supposed to be formed by the power of the sun, but if it was imperfect, it could not receive that power (*Conv.* iv. 20).

BALLATA IX.

TERRIBLE IN BEAUTY.

Io mi son pargoletta bella e nuova.

"A MAIDEN young and beautiful am I,
And I am come that I may show to you
The beauties of the region where I grew :

I come from Heaven, and thither shall return,
To give to others joy in my clear light : 5
And he who sees me, nor with love doth burn,
Of love shall never have clear-visioned sight :
For nothing was denied to my delight,
When Nature begged me of him as her due,
Who wills, dear ladies, me to join with you. 10

Each star that shines within mine eye doth rain
Showers of its light, and of its potency :
My beauties to the world as new remain,
Because from Heaven's high clime they come to me ;
Nor can men ever know them perfectly, 15
Save by the knowledge of a man in whom
Love dwells, with joy all others to illumine."

These words are read as written in the eye
Of a bright angel, seen with beauty rife,

BALLATA IX.

The reappearance of "*pargoletta*" in line 1 leads to the conclusion that she who speaks, manifesting what she is without speaking, is neither the living nor the transfigured Beatrice, but the Philosophy whom, in the *Convito* stage of his inner life, he had admitted to a co-ordinate share in his affections, not without the risk of its becoming predominant. So taken, Philosophy boasts, as in *Conv.* ii. 16, of her heavenly origin. To that heaven she will return to give a fresh joy to its inhabitants. The poet then transfers to her what he had written of old of Beatrice herself. To assume, with Fraticelli, that the "*pargoletta*" is Beatrice, seems to me at variance with *Purg.* xxxi. 59, as interpreting the successive stages of Dante's inner life, to say nothing of the fact that the term could hardly be applied to one who, like Beatrice, was a "*donna*."

¹¹ Each planet had its own special influence presided over its own special study in the *Trivium* and *Quadrivium* (*Conv.* ii. 14). All were found combined in Philosophy, as the Queen of Sciences. To understand their preciousness required the love which shows itself in self-renunciation.

¹² The "angel" is clearly the "maiden" of line 1, *i.e.*, Philosophy. In gazing on her in the hope of an escape of some sort, we have a reproduction of the thought of *V. N. c.* 36, when he had found in the "gentle lady" of the window, a refuge from over-much sorrow. As it was, however, his devotion to that new affection, to the service of the new mistress, Philosophy, had brought with it a new suffering, and he was well nigh sick unto death. I do not see any adequate grounds for finding the "*pargoletta*" in either Gentucca or the lady of the Casentino.

Whence I who, to escape, looked steadfastly,
 Incur the risk of forfeiting my life;
 For such a wound I met in that fierce strife
 From one whom I within her eyes beheld,
 That I go weeping, all my peace dispelled.

SONNET XXXVI.

BEAUTIFUL AND PITILESS.

E' non à legno di sì forti nocchi.

No tree there is so gnarled and stiff to ply,
 No rock that flinty hardness so doth fill,
 But that the cruel fair who doth me kill
 Can kindle love there with her beauteous eye.
 Hence when one gazes as she passeth by,
 If he withdraw not, Death will work his will,
 So fails his heart; for vainly prays he still
 That his stern office he may modify.
 Ah! wherefore was such wondrous power assigned
 To the fair eyes of lady so severe,
 Who careth not to save her worshipper,
 And in such ruthless mood doth persevere,
 That if one dies for her, to that she's blind,
 And hides her beauties that he may not find?

SONNET XXXVI.

The "stern lady" whose eyes have such terrible power is, as in *S. xxxv.*, *B. ix.*, Philosophy. Having once started the idea that this was the "gentle lady" who had pity on him (*P. N. c. 38*; *Comp. ii. 3*), he plays with it, presents it in many aspects, writes poems which half veil and half reveal his meaning, *φωκάρια ουνοτόλου*—words for the wise, puzzles for the Philistines—not without a certain pleasure in the thought that they will mystify his readers. *Comp. ii. 1* explains the "stocks" and "stones" of men without art or knowledge. Even there Philosophy, with her Orphic power, moves to love; but the love is one of the *δαιμόνιαι πάθη*, the "terrible passions" of which Plato speaks. She looks on at their fruitless efforts, sees them wither and perish in striving to obtain her, and yet she hides herself from them and they have no fruition.

The words "*si spanocchi*" in l. 8, literally to deal out the grains of an ear of corn one by one, is, I think, sufficiently expressed by "modify." The judgment is to come bit by bit.

SONNET XXXVII.

A CRY FOR HELP.

Se vedi gli occhi miei di pianger vaghi.

IF thou dost see mine eyes so fain to weep,
 Through the new sorrow that devours my heart,
 By her I pray, who ne'er from thee doth part,
 That thou, Sire, them from their desire would'st keep;
 That is, that thy right hand should vengeance heap 5
 On him who murders justice, and doth flee
 To tyrant lord, and sucks his poison free,
 Wherewith he fain would all the wide world steep,
 And hath of so great terror cast the chill
 Into thy subjects' hearts, that all are dumb : 10
 But thou, Love's fire, whose light the Heaven doth fill,
 Raise thou that Virtue who lies all o'ercome,
 Naked and cold, and screen her with thy veil,
 For, without her, all peace on earth doth fail.

SONNET XXXVIII.

DISAPPOINTMENT.

Per quella via che la bellezza corre.

ALONG the pathway Beauty loves to tread,
 When to awaken Love it seeks the mind,
 There wends a lady, sportively inclined,

SONNET XXXVII.

It is with a certain satisfaction that we come, in the midst of all the marvellous, half-morbid introspections of the Minor Poems, upon one which brings us face to face with the man of action, whose interests range widely over the kingdoms of the world. The Sonnet takes its place among the many cries of "How long, O Lord, how long?" which have gone up from the patriots and reformers of all countries, of none more than of Italy. The vague words, distinct enough to him who wrote them, leave us to guess to what special crisis of Dante's life they belong. The Sonnet may be addressed to the Emperor Henry VII. (comp. *Ep.* 5, vol. i. p. cv.), or, as I think more probable, to the great Emperor of the Universe. She who never parts from the earthly or the heavenly Emperor is the eternal justice of God. He who "murders Justice" may be the Neri party of Florence, or Charles of Valois, or Boniface VIII., or Philip the Fair of France; the "tyrant" may be, according as we adopt one or other of these hypotheses, Charles, or Boniface VIII., or Philip, or Clement V. The "poison" is the grasping greed of gain, for which both Philip and Clement were conspicuous. I incline to the last of the four combinations (comp. *Purg.* xxxii. 151-160), and refer the Sonnet to the indignation with which Dante looked on the suppression of the Templars (*Purg.* xx. 93), to the hopes which he began to cherish after the election of Henry VII. (vol. i. pp. xcii.-xcix.)

SONNET XXXVIII.

The enigma deepens. Dark sayings become darker. We say, as the Jews did of Ezekiel, "Doth he not speak parables?" The key to the puzzle may be found, I believe, in the thought

As one who deems that I by her am led,
 And when she comes where soars the high tower's head, 5
 Which opens when the soul consent doth find,
 She hears a voice come floating swift as wind,
 "Rise, Lady fair, nor enter there," it said.
 For to that Lady who doth sit on high,
 When she the sceptre of high lordship claimed, 10
 Love granted it, according to her will.
 And when that fair one sees herself passed by,
 Driven from that mansion which Love's home is named,
 She back returns and shame her face doth fill.

SONNET XXXIX.

STELLAR INFLUENCES.

Da quella luce, che il suo corso gira.

FROM that bright star which moveth on its way
 For ever at the empyrean's will,
 And between Mars and Saturn ruleth still,
 E'en as the expert astrologer doth say,
 She, who inspires me with her beauty's ray, 5
 Doth subtle art of sovereignty distil;
 And he whose glory doth the fourth heaven fill,
 Gives her the power my longing soul to sway;

that the two ladies are Human and Divine Wisdom; that the tower is, in Bunyan's language, that of Man-soul; that the path by which beauty passes into the heart is that of sight; that the gate is that of the will. I see in the Sonnet a kind of palinode of the praises lavished on Philosophy in the *Convito*; a recognition that a true Theology has, after all, higher claims, a transition to the spirit of the *Purgatory* and *Paradise*. The "gentle lady" must, after all, give way to Beatrice. The poet returns to his first love. See *Study on the Genesis and Growth of the Commedia*.

SONNET XXXIX.

We are still in the region of allegory. The Sonnet is a condensed expression of the theory of planetary influence and correspondences, stated at length in *Conv.* ii. 14 (comp. *Ball.* ix. 11; *Cans.* 14), where the seven spheres are placed over against the seven studies of the *Trivium* (Grammar, Dialectic, Rhetoric) and the *Quadrivium* (Arithmetic, Music, Geometry, and Astronomy). The sphere of the fixed stars corresponds in like manner to Physics and Metaphysics; the *Primum Mobile* to Ethics; the Empyrean to Theology. We are left to guess whether the poet speaks of Beatrice or the "*donna gentile*," of Theology or Philosophy, and the answer to that question must depend on the date which we assign to the Sonnet. Assuming that it rightly follows *S.* xxxviii., I incline to the former view. The systematic arrangement of the *Paradise*, according to the ten heavenly spheres, falls in with this interpretation.

¹ Jupiter lies between Mars and Saturn; the sun, in the Ptolemaic system, is in the fourth heaven (l. 7); the first heaven (l. 11) is that of the moon; the third (l. 12) that of Venus, which represents the persuasive power of rhetoric. Comp. *Cans.* xiv.

And that fair planet known as Mercury
 Colours her speech with all its virtue rare ; 10
 And the first heaven its boon does not deny ;
 She who the third heaven ruleth as her share,
 Makes her heart full of utterance pure and free :
 So all the seven to perfect her agree.

BALLATA X.

THE SCORN OF SCORN.

Voi che sapete ragionar d' amore.

Ye who are skilled of Love discourse to hold,
 Hear ye this ballad-song of mine forlorn,
 Which telleth of a lady full of scorn,
 Who, through her power, my whole heart hath controlled.

So doth she scorn whose'er on her doth gaze, 5
 She makes him bend his eyes for very fear,
 For still round hers she evermore displays
 A portraiture of cruelty severe ;
 While yet within the image sweet they bear
 Which makes the gentle soul speak thankful praise ; 10
 So full of might that when 'tis seen, always
 From every heart it draws forth sighs untold.

She seems to say, "I will not lowly be
 Toward any one who gazeth on mine eyes ;
 For there I bear that Lord of courtesy 15
 Whose darts have made new feelings in me rise."

BALLATA X.

Here the writer explains his own enigmas. He tells us (*Conv.* iii. 9-15) that he wrote this *Ballata* to represent the aspect which Philosophy presents to the man void of understanding, to the seeker who as yet is unworthy of her gracious smile, and quotes in *Canz.* xv., of which *Conv.* iii. is an exposition, the very epithets of "proud" and "ruthless" which he here applies to her. She will not be lowly towards one who looks too boldly into her eyes, and requires in her lover the temper of reverential awe. But within, for those who so seek her, she has an aspect full of grace, and so his desires will have strength to persevere in their quest in spite of her seeming harshness. I assign the poem, with little hesitation, to the transition period of Dante's life, represented by the *Convito*, and therefore identify the "Lady" of whom it speaks with Philosophy. We are reminded at once of *Eccles.* iv. 16-18, and of the Janus-like face of Wisdom in the Giotto fresco at Assisi.

And, certes, I believe she in such wise
 Keeps them, to gaze upon them as she please :
 E'en so an upright lady acts, who sees
 How those who would do honour her behold. 20

I have no hope that pity her will move
 To deign on others to bestow a glance ;
 So proud a lady is she, she who Love
 Shows in her eyes, so fair of countenance. 25
 But let her hide and keep him, as may chance,
 That such bliss I awhile should see no more ;
 Yet shall my longings have at last a power
 Against the scorn of Love so proud and cold.

SESTINA I.

SIMILITUDES OF LOVE.

Al poco giorno, ed al gran cerchio d' ombra.

To shortened days and circle wide of shade
 I have now come, alas ! and snow-clad hills,
 When all bright hues grow pale upon the grass ;
 Yet my desire hath not yet lost its green,
 And so is rooted in the flinty rock, 5
 Which speaks and hears, as though it were a lady.

SESTINA I.

We come upon three poems, obviously of the same period, of a different type. They belong in their outward form to a class of which the Provençal poets were fond, and Arnould Daniel, for whom in *Purg.* xxvii. 116 Dante expresses a profound reverence, was the inventor, as perhaps of the *terza rima*, so also of the *sestina*, ringing its manifold changes, like those of a chime of bells, upon the six words which are chosen as a theme. The metre was used afterwards by Petrarch and other poets. It is obvious that such a form is in the highest degree artificial, but, as with the equally artificial alphabetic Psalms of the Hebrews, the "Lamentations" of Jeremiah, or the strophes and antistrophes of a Greek chorus, the power of the poet to master it becomes a triumph of his strength. The performance, from our standpoint, seems to belong to the acrobats of poetry, but that exercise, as a part of literary gymnastic, may become part of the training of the athlete (vol. i. p. lxxix.) As such I conceive Dante tried it. It was in his nature, as in the instance of Lucan (*H.* xxv. 94) and Ovid (*H.* xlv. 97), to match his strength against the great masters of poetry precisely in the points where they were supposed to be pre-eminent, and it will be owned that here also he has succeeded. It may be noted that the laws of the *Sestina* allowed the use of homonyms, *sc.*, of words of the same form and sound but different sense (as, *e.g.*, here in the use of *colli* = necks = hills), a license of which the translator finds it difficult to avail himself. Where, as in this instance, the form is more than the matter, it is scarcely necessary to track the sequence of thought line by line. What one wonders at is that, under such conditions, there is any sequence at all. Briefly I take it that here also the "lady" is Philosophy. *Sest. i.* opens with the winter of discontent in which her worshipper finds himself (ll. 1-6). He would fain escape (ll. 21-24), but cannot. He sees her clothed in green, the hue of hope (l. 25), yet for him there is small chance that she will accept his love, though he would sleep

So in like manner doth this fair young lady
 Stand frozen, as the snow stands in the shade,
 For she no more is moved than is the rock,
 When the sweet season comes which warms the hills, 10
 And makes them change from white to pleasant green,
 Because it clothes them all with flowers and grass.

When on her brow she wears a wreath of grass,
 From out our thoughts she drives each other lady,
 Since mingle there the crisp gold and the green, 15
 So well that Love comes there to seek their shade,
 Who shuts me up amid the lowly hills,
 More closely far than doth the flinty rock.

Her beauties have more power than any rock,
 Her blow may not be healed by any grass; 20
 For I have fled through valleys and o'er hills,
 That I might freedom gain from this fair lady.
 But 'gainst her face I seek in vain for shade,
 In hill, or wall, or tree with foliage green.

Aforetime I have seen her clothed in green, 25
 So beautiful, she might have warmed a rock
 With that Love which I bear to her mere shade;
 Whence in a meadow bright with greenest grass,
 I wooed her, as a love-inspiring lady,
 On all sides girt by highest-soaring hills. 30

But sooner shall the streams flow up the hills
 Ere this fair growth of plant so fresh and green
 Shall kindle, as is wont with gentle lady,
 For me, who fain would sleep upon the rock,
 All my life long, and wander, eating grass, 35
 Only to see her garments give their shade.

Where'er the hills cast round their darkest shade,
 Beneath the fresh green doth the fair young lady
 Dispel it, like rock crystal in the grass.

on the rock and feed on the grass, *i.e.*, lead the life of a hermit, if only he might behold but the skirts of her garment (ll. 31-35), while she shines like a precious gem where the shadows fall darkest (ll. 37-39). It may be noted that this *Sestina* is twice quoted in the *V. E.* (ii. 10, 13), in the latter case as an example of the higher style which is fit for one "*aulice poetarum*." In l. 39 I read "*la*" instead of "*gli*."

SESTINA II.

SIMILITUDES OF LOVE.

Amor mi mena tal fiata all' ombra.

LOVE leads me many times beneath the shade
 Of ladies fair, whose necks are beauteous hills,
 And whiter far than flower of any grass ;
 And one there cometh, clothed in robes of green,
 Who in my heart dwells, as strength dwells in rock, 5
 And among others seems as fairest lady.

And when I glance upon this gentle lady,
 Whose brightness scatters every dusky shade,
 Her light so smites my heart it turns to rock ;
 I roam, as strangled, all among the hills, 10
 Till I revive, and am with love more green
 Than ever yet was spring or freshest grass.

I ween no virtue ever was in grass
 With power to heal, as dwells in this fair lady,
 Who takes my heart, yet leaves my life all green. 15
 When she restores it, I am as a shade :
 No longer have I life, save as the hills,
 Which loftiest are, and of the hardest rock.

A heart I had as hard as any rock,
 When I saw her as fresh as is the grass 20
 In the sweet spring that clothes with flowers the hills ;
 And now 'tis lowly found toward each fair lady :
 Only through love of her who gives a shade
 More precious than did ever foliage green.

SESTINA II.

Philosophy appears, as before, clothed in green, and with a wreath of flowers on her head. He feels, as before, the two seemingly incompatible impressions of her rigour and her sweetness (ll. 7-18). Of one thing he is certain, that his love for her makes him more lowly towards all others who, in any measure, reproduce her likeness. Never was any gem *instaglie* or painter's ideal of beauty so fair in its perfection as even the very shadow of her gracious loveliness (ll. 34-36). Neither this *Sestina* nor the following appears in the editions of Kraft and Witze, but Fraticelli gives what seem to me adequate reasons for receiving them.

For seasons hot or cold, or sere or green, 25
 Still make me glad, to such sweet rest doth rock
 The great delight of resting in her shade.
 O sight! how fair, to see her on the grass
 Tripping more deftly than each other lady,
 Dancing her way through valleys and o'er hills. 30

Long as I dwell 'mid mountains and 'mid hills,
 Love leaves me not, but keeps me fresh and green,
 As none he yet has kept for fairest lady;
 For never yet was graving seen on rock,
 Nor any form of colour fair on grass, 35
 Which might seem bright as is her very shade.

Thus Love contents me, while I live in shade,
 To find my joy and bliss in this fair lady,
 Who on her head hath placed a wreath of grass.

SESTINA III.

SIMILITUDES OF LOVE.

Gran nobiltà mi par vedere all' ombra.

I seem to see great glory in the shade
 Of ladies fair whose necks are ivory hills,
 And each on other, as she goes, flings grass;
 For she is there, through whom my life is green,
 And in her love fixed, as in wall a rock, 5
 And stronger than was ever love for lady.

If I have heart-love for mine own dear lady,
 Let no man marvel, nor thereon cast shade;
 For my heart, through her, holds its joy like rock,
 Which, were it not so, would bring low the hills, 10
 And so would change them as the hue of green
 Fades from the aspect of the new-mown grass.

SESTINA III.

The *tour de force* continues, as if the writer could go on for ever with variations upon the same theme. I do not find that the variations in this instance present any new features calling for special annotation.

I well may say that she adorns the grass
 Which for adornment, every other lady
 Blends with fair flowers and foliage fresh and green ; 15
 Because so brightly shineth her sweet shade,
 That it makes glad the valleys, plains, and hills,
 And, certes, gives a virtue to the rock.

I know that I should be more vile than rock,
 If she were not to me as healing grass : 20
 She hath attained to scale the highest hills,
 Which have been mounted by no other lady,
 Save her alone, whom I love in the shade,
 Like little bird half-hid in foliage green.

And if I were like lowly plant and green, 25
 I could disclose the virtue of each rock,
 And none should hide itself beneath the shade ;
 For I am hers, her flower, her fruit, her grass ;
 But none can do as doth my gentle lady,
 Whether she cometh down, or climbs, the hills. 30

I seem alway as one who climbs the hills,
 When I part from her ; and feel fresh and green,
 So do I joy, in looking on my lady :
 And when I see her not, like any rock
 I stand, and watch in faith, still fresh as grass, 35
 That soul who finds her chief joy in the shade.

More I seek not, than ever in her shade
 To stand, who is of all the noblest lady,
 Fairer than any flowers, or leaves, or grass.

CANZONE X.

HARD AS A ROCK.

Amor, tu vedi ben, che questa donna.

LOVE, thou see'st well that this my Lady fair
 For thy great power cares not at any time,

CANZONE X.

The form adopted, that of a double *sestina*, seems the *ne plus ultra* of fantastic complication. There are sixty-six lines, and to these five words only are allowed as rhymes, and the

Which rules as mistress over others fair :
 And when she saw she was my Lady fair,
 By that bright ray which on my face shed light, 5
 Of cruelty she grew the mistress fair,
 And seemed to have no heart of lady fair,
 But of some creature wild, to love most cold :
 For, through the season hot and through the cold,
 I see her semblance as a lady fair, 10
 Who had been fashioned out of goodly rock,
 By hand of one who best can grave the rock.

And I, who am more steadfast than a rock,
 Obeying thee, through love of lady fair,
 In secret bear the pressure of the rock 15
 With which thou woundedst me, as 'twere a rock,
 That had annoyed thee for long length of time ;
 So that it reached my heart where I am rock.
 And never was discovered any rock,
 Which, from the sun's great power or its own light, 20
 Had in it so much virtue or such light,
 Which could protect me from that self-same rock,
 So that it should not lead me with its cold
 Thither, where I shall be as dead with cold.

Thou knowest, O Sire, that by the freezing cold, 25
 Water becomes a solid crystal rock,
 Beneath the north-wind and its piercing cold,
 And aye the air, through elemental cold,
 Is changed, that water, as a lady fair,
 Reigns in that clime by reason of the cold. 30
 So before look that seemeth icy cold,
 Freezes my very blood full many a time,

changes are rung on these with manifold iteration, till the reader is constrained to say, "Enough, and more than enough." It is almost useless in such a case to expect any subtle insight or profound emotion. It is simply, as before, a *tour de force*, as of one who can dance his hornpipe even in the heaviest fetters, exulting in the fact that he at least keeps time ; that he can, even under this almost unendurable restraint, succeed in making the verses say what he meant them to say. It seems to me idle, in such a case, to draw biographical inferences and to identify the "*Pietra*" of the poem with a supposed *Pietra de' Scrovigni* of Padua as one of Dante's lady-loves (comp. *Canz.* 9, *n.*). So far as the poem expresses a real feeling, I refer it, as in the preceding poems, to Philosophy, as in the "*donna gentile*" of the second stage of the *Trilogia* of the poet's life.

²⁰ The thought connects itself with the belief that precious stones, such as carbuncle, amethyst, heliotrope, or bloodstone (*H.* xxiv. 93), and the like, derived their special virtues directly from the sun.

And that same thought which shortens most my time
 Is all transformed into a humour cold,
 Which, through mine eyes, doth find its way to light, 35
 There, where it first received that ruthless light.

In her is met all beauty's varied light,
 As also of all cruelty the cold
 Runs to her heart, where dwelleth not thy light ;
 Since in my eyes she shines with such a light, 40
 When I behold her, that her form in rock
 I see, or wheresoe'er I turn my light.
 And from her eyes there comes so sweet a light,
 That I care not for other ladies fair.
 Would that she were more piteous Lady fair 45
 To me, who ask of her, in dark and light,
 To serve her only in each place and time,
 Nor for aught else desire to live long time.

Wherefore, O Power, that art before all time,
 Before all motion and material light, 50
 Pity thou me, who pass such grievous time.
 Seek thou her heart now, for it is full time,
 So that through thee may vanish all the cold,
 Which lets me not, like others, live my time ;
 For if there comes on me thy tempest time 55
 In this my state, that fair and goodly rock
 Will see me slain and sepulchred in rock,
 Never to rise again till past is Time,
 When I shall see if ever lady fair
 Was pitiless as is this Lady fair. 60

My Song, I bear in mind a Lady fair,
 Such that she is to me as flinty rock ;
 Give thou me courage, where all men seem cold,
 So that I dare, in spite of all that cold,
 That new thing which thy form shall bring to light, 65
 Which never hath been done at any time.

⁶⁵ We are reminded of Milton's "Things unattempted yet in prose or rime."

CANZONE XI.

WINTER.

Io son venuto al punto della rota.

I to that point in the great wheel have come,
 Wherein the horizon, when the sun doth set,
 Brings forth the twin-starred heaven to our sight;
 And Love's fair star away from us doth roam,
 Through the bright rays obliquely on it met 5
 In such wise that they veil its tender light;
 That planet, which makes keen the cold of night,
 Shows himself to us in the circle great,
 Where each star of the seven casts little shade:
 Yet lighter is not made 10
 One single thought of Love, that, with its weight,
 O'erloads my soul that is more hard than rock,
 For its fast hold of image all of rock.

There riseth up from Ethiopia's sands
 A wind from far-off clime which rends the air, 15
 Through the sun's orb that heats it with its ray.
 The sea it crosses; thence, o'er all the lands
 Such clouds it brings that but for wind more fair,
 O'er all our hemisphere 'twould hold its way;
 And then it breaks, and falls in whitest spray 20

CANZONE XI.

¹⁻¹⁰ We note the display of astronomical knowledge as reminding us of numerous passages of the *Commedia* (*Purg.* ii. 1-6, ix. 1-9, xxv. 1-6, xxvii. 1-6, *et al.*). The fact to be stated is that it is winter, when the sun is in Capricorn, when therefore the opposite sign of the zodiac, the Gemini, rises as the sun is setting. Possibly the verses that follow describe phenomena that met in some given year, and if we could ascertain these (which, as yet, however, commentators have not succeeded in doing), we might be able to fix the date of the *Canzone* with absolute precision.

⁷ The planet is Saturn, the coldest of the planets, to the influence of which was traced the severity of an exceptionally hard winter. I follow Kraft and Witte in thus interpreting. The phenomena of Nature might seem to wither all tender emotions, but the mind of the singer is still weighed down with the sad memories of a love unreciprocated.

¹⁴ The south wind blows, and brings with it clouds which discharge themselves in snow and rain, but still there is no change of feeling, for the beloved one is still obdurate. I look on the poem as describing, like its predecessors, the struggles of the seeker after wisdom, who woos Philosophy and feels that he woos in vain, as far as the full fruition of wisdom is concerned.

Of frozen snow and pestilential showers,
Whence all the air is filled with wail and woe ;

Yet Love who, when winds blow,
Draws up his net to heaven's eternal bowers,
Leaveth me not ; so dear a lady fair 25
Is found that proud one, mine own Lady fair.

Fled far is every bird that loves the heat
From Europe's clime, where evermore are seen
The seven bright stars that are the lords of cold ;
And others cease awhile their warblings sweet, 30
To sound no more until the Spring be green,
Unless their song by sorrow be controlled :
And all the creatures that are gay and bold
By nature, are from Love emancipate,
Because the cold their spirits' strength doth kill : 35
Yet mine more Love doth fill ;

For my sweet thoughts still keep their first estate,
Nor are they given me by the change of time ;
My Lady gives them in her youth's brief time.

Now have the green leaves passed their fix'd bound, 40
Which the Ram's power to spring-tide life did stir,
To clothe the world ; and all the grass is dead,
And each fair bough of verdure stript is found,
Unless it be in laurel, pine, or fir,
Or whatso'er its verdure doth not shed ; 45
And now the season is so keen and dread,
It blights the flowerets on each wide champaign,
And ill by them the hoar-frost keen is borne ;
Yet the sharp amorous thorn
Love from my heart will not draw out again, 50
For I to bear it still am strong alway,
Long as I live, though I should live alway.

²⁷ Many birds have fled from Europe, which never loses sight of the Seven Stars of the North (Ursa Major ; comp. *Purg.* i. 30, xxx. 2), to a warmer clime. Those that remain and all other living creatures feel the icy spell of winter and hibernate in silence, but love is still glowing in the soul, for it does not depend on the change of seasons, but on the might of its beloved one.

⁴⁰ The leaves which spring (Aries, as in *H.* i. 38) had called forth are all, evergreens excepted, withered, but the lover's heart is still pricked with the thorn of sorrow, and will be so for ever.

The watery mists enahrouded pour their stream
 From vapours that earth holds within her womb,
 And sendeth upwards from the vasty deep ; 55
 And so the path on which the sun did gleam,
 And gave me joy, a river is become,
 And shall be long as winter sway doth keep.
 Earth like a white enamelled form doth sleep ;
 And the still water turneth all to glass, 60
 Through the sharp cold that binds it from afar :
 Yet I from this my war
 Have not turned back a single step to pass ;
 Nor will I turn ; for, if the pain is sweet,
 Death must surpass whatever else is sweet. 65

What then, my Canzon', will become of me
 In the sweet spring-tide season when with showers
 Love the wide earth from all the heavens shall fill :
 When, in this freezing chill,
 Love doth in me, not elsewhere, show his powers ! 70
 'Twill be the state of one as marble cold,
 If maiden fair for heart hath marble cold.

CANZONE XII.

RETURN OF SPRING.

Amor, che muovi tua virtù dal cielo.

LOVE, who from Heaven thy virtue dost unfold,
 As the sun doth its light,

⁵⁵ The winter torrents rush down the watercourses that had been dry in summer, and the earth is frozen, but the warfare goes on. We note that the poet describes an Italian winter. The earth is frozen, but not the rivers or the lakes. The very pain of the conflict is sweet. How far sweeter will be death that ends it !

⁶⁵ If this is the poet's state in winter, what will it be in spring, when love is stronger ? If the beloved one still shows a heart of stone, the lover will be a stone also. As far as I know, the commentators who play the part of detectives have not found the Casentino lady or Gentucca in the "*pargoletta*" of the concluding lines, perhaps, as Witte says, through pure inattention. In the *Convito*, had it been completed, she would probably have appeared as Philosophy.

CANZONE XII.

¹ The *Canzone* is quoted in *V. E.* ii. 5, 11. Winter has passed into spring, and with it come the sweet influences of love that warm men's blood. Without love our best efforts are but as a picture in a dark place, where we can see neither form nor colour.

For there we learn most clearly what its might,
 Where its rays find the greatest nobleness ;
 And, as far off he drives the dark and cold, 5
 So thou, great Lord, enthronèd in the height,
 In others' hearts all vile thoughts putt'st to flight,
 Nor against thee can wrath long conflict press.
 Well may each soul feel all thy power to bless,
 Which the whole world is striving to attain. 10

Without thee lieth slain
 Whatever power we have of doing good ;
 E'en as a picture in the darkness seen,
 Which cannot so be showed,
 Nor give delight of varied skill and scene. 15

Upon my heart there smiteth still thy light,
 As on the star, sun's ray,
 Since that my soul as handmaid owned the sway,
 From my first youth, of thy supernal power :
 Hence a thought springs to life which guides her right, 20
 With speech of subtle play,
 To let my glance o'er each fair object stray
 With more delight, the more it charms the hour.
 And through this gazing, to my spirit's bower
 A Maiden fair, who hath enslaved me, came, 25
 And in me kindled flame,
 As water, through its clearness, kindleth fire ;
 For at her coming those bright rays of thine,
 With splendour I admire,
 In those her fair eyes upward leap and shine. 30

Fair as she is in essence, and benign
 In act, and full of love,
 So still my fancy, which doth restless rove,

¹⁶ As the light to the eye, so is the light of love to the poet's heart. Therefore he turns to all forms of visible beauty, and so a maiden presents herself to him, in whom we recognise the familiar features of Philosophy as the "*donna gentile*." Cold herself, she, like a glass sphere full of water, kindles fire. One notes the similitude as coming from the student of natural science (*Par.* ii. 97-102). Possibly, however, the words may simply describe the reflection of fire in water.

¹⁷ Mediæval astronomy taught that the light of the fixed stars as well as of the planets was derived from the sun (*Par.* xxiii. 30, *n.*)

²¹ Yet it is not so much her own beauty in itself as the power of love that works through it that sways the soul. So fire neither adds to the sun's heat nor takes away, yet primarily derives its power from the sun as the source of all light and heat.

Doth paint her in my mind, where is her seat.
 Not that it is itself so subtly fine 38
 Such high emprise to prove,
 But in thy might it onward dares to move
 Beyond the power which Nature gives to us.
 And with thy power her beauty groweth thus
 As we may judge of work wrought out complete, 40
 On subject fit and meet,
 E'en as the sun is archetype of fire,
 Which nor gives power to him nor takes away,
 But lifts elsewhere far higher
 The blissful influence of his glorious ray. 45

Therefore, O Sire, of such a nature kind,
 That this nobility,
 Bestowed on earth, and all benignity
 Doth from thy fount on high for ever flow,
 Look on my life, my life so hard, with mind 50
 And look of sympathy ;
 For thy fierce heat, through her fair majesty,
 Pervades my heart with great excess of woe.
 Oh ! by thy sweetness, Love, cause her to know
 The great desire I have on her to look ; 55
 I pray thee do not brook
 That she, in her fresh youth, my life should wrong ;
 For she as yet sees not how she doth please,
 Nor how my love is strong,
 Nor how that in her eyes she bears my peace. 60

Great honour will be thine if thou shalt aid,
 And mine a gift full rare,
 Beyond all knowledge, for I now am there,
 Where e'en my life I can no more defend ;
 For all my spirits are so spent and frayed, 65
 That scarce can I declare,

⁴⁸ Therefore the poet prays love to help him to make the object of his love feel how greatly he desires to see her. Without that knowledge she, in her youthful beauty, might inflict a pain which she would shrink from inflicting, simply because she did not know that in her eyes her lover found his peace.

⁶¹ Such is the state in which the singer finds himself, that unless love comes to his aid destruction seems imminent. Will he not incline the fair one to thoughts of pity?

Unless thy will shall pardon their despair,
 How they can long endure, nor have an end.
 Still to thy power shall men in homage bend,
 In this fair Lady seen of worthiest might ; 70
 For still, it seems, 'tis right,
 To give her of all good great company,
 As one who in the world her station took
 To hold her sovereignty
 Over the minds of all that on her look. 75

Song, to the three least guilty of our land
 Take thou thy way before thou elsewhere go ;
 Salute the two, and see thy power thou show,
 To draw the third from evil company :
 Tell them that good against good lifts not hand, 80
 Before with evil ones its strength it show :
 Tell them that he is mad who doth not know,
 Through fear of shame, from madness far to flee.
 He only fears who shrinks from war with ill,
 For fleeing this all good he gains at will. 85

CANZONE XIII.

LOVE'S SERVICE.

Io sento sì d' Amor la gran possanza.

I feel so much the potency of Love
 That I may not endure
 Long while to suffer ; whence I sorrow so,
 Because his might doth hourly stronger prove,
 And I feel mine so poor 8

⁷⁸ The "envoy" of the *Canzone* is not admitted by Witte and Krafft as belonging to it. We ask in vain, in any case, who were the three least guilty to whom it was addressed. The names which suggest themselves as possible are Dino Compagni, G. Villani, Jacopo di Ceraldo (*Faur.* i. 201). Some light might be thrown on the politics of Florence and on Dante's life if we could discover why two out of the three are simply greeted, while the third receives a special exhortation to amend his ways. If we could assume a date for the *Canzone* before A.D. 1300, we might think of Guido Cavalcanti as failing to sympathise with his friend's pursuit of Philosophy, and drifting to an epicurean materialism.

CANZONE XIII.

¹ The consuming power of love brings pain and the sense of impotence. Strength must be sought from the bright eyes of the beloved one, *i.e.*, as in *Conv.* ii. 16, from the "demonstrations of Philosophy."

. Become, from wonted use I fall below.
 I ask not Love beyond my wish to go ;
 For should he do as much as will demands,
 That strength which Nature gave into my hands
 Would fail to meet it, vanquished in the strife : 10
 And this is that which worketh keenest woe,
 That power keeps not its faith to will's commands ;
 But if in will to good our guerdon stands,
 I ask to gain a little longer life
 From that sweet splendour of the beauteous eyes, 15
 Which comfort brings, to soothe Love's agonies.

The rays of those bright eyes find entrance wide
 To mine, which Love doth sway,
 And where I bitter taste, they sweetness bear,
 And know the road, as travellers who have tried, 20
 Before, the well-trod way ;
 And know the place where they with Love did fare,
 When through mine eyes they brought and left him there.
 Wherefore they turn to me and show me grace :
 And they wrong her, whose service I embrace 25
 Hiding from me, who love with such keen fire,
 That only for her service life is dear ;
 And all my thoughts, where Love fills every space,
 As to their banner, to her service pace :
 Wherefore to work for her I so desire 30
 That if I thought 'twould please her I should fly,
 Light were the task, yet know I, I should die.

Full true is Love which thus hath captured me
 And bindeth me full fast,
 Since I would do for him what now I say ; 35
 For no love with that love compared may be,
 Which finds its joy at last

¹⁷ Those eyes have such a power to kindle love that the poet's life is only dear to him so far as it enables him to serve her. Yes, if it would please her, he would be content to leave her, though he knows that it would bring death.

²³ The highest form of love is to seek death, if only that may be a true form of service and help to the beloved one. He is her servant, in the true sense of the word, a *cavaliere servente*. If her youth (possibly his own youth or his inexperience as a student of Philosophy) denies him a present reward, he is content to wait.

In death, another's wishes to obey :
 And over me such purpose held its sway,
 As soon as that strong passion, in its might, 60
 Was born from the exceeding great delight
 Of her fair face in whom all beauty dwells.
 Her slave am I, and when my fond thoughts stray
 On what she is, I am contented quite.
 For well against his will may man serve right ; 65
 And if my youth all hope of prize repels,
 I wait a time when reason shall mature,
 If only life may long enough endure.

When in my thoughts on longing sweet I dwell,
 Of greater longings born, 60
 Which all my power to deeds of goodness woo,
 My payment seems my service to excel ;
 And with more wrong is borne
 By me, so deem I, name of servant true ;
 Thus in her eyes in whom my joy I view, 65
 Service is found, at others' hands, full pay.
 But since beyond the truth I will not stray,
 'Tis meet such longing should as service count,
 For if I seek my labours to pursue,
 Not so on mine own good my fond thoughts stay 60
 As upon hers who o'er me holdeth sway.
 For this I do that she may higher mount :
 And I am wholly hers, attaining this,
 That Love has made me worthy of such bliss.

No power but Love could me of such mood make, 65
 That I might worthily
 Belong to her who yields not to Love's sway,
 But stands as queen, who little heed doth take
 Of love's intensity,

60 Nay, but he is more than paid for a service which is its own exceeding great reward. His service too is little more than the will to serve, but the will may be counted for the deed.

65 Yet his passion is not returned. She (Philosophy) looks calmly on. While he finds fresh beauty in her face, a new pain and a new joy, he does not find in her the fruition which he seeks. She does not satisfy his quenchless thirst (*Conv.* iii. 15, iv. 12, 13). In *Par.* iii. 70-90 we have the report of a different and higher experience.

Who without her can never pass a day. 70
 Ne'er have I seen her but she did display
 A beauty new that still in her I found,
 Whence in me Love's great might doth more abound,
 E'en as new joy is added to the old ;
 And hence it chances that I still do stay 75
 In one condition, and Love me doth meet
 With such keen anguish and such rapture sweet,
 For all the time he lays on me his hold,
 Which lasts from when I lost her from my view,
 E'en to that hour when she is seen anew. 80

My Canzon' fair, if thou art like to me,
 Thou wilt not look with scorn
 As much as might befit thy goodness sweet ;
 Wherefore I pray that thou learn subtlety,
 Dear song of true Love born, 85
 To take the way and method that is meet.
 If true knight thee with offered welcome greet ;
 Before thou yield thyself to do his will,
 See if his soul with thy love thou canst fill,
 And if thou canst not, quickly let him go ; 90
 For good with good still sitteth on one seat,
 But oft it chances one doth find him still
 In such a company he fares but ill,
 Through evil fame that others on him blow.
 With the base dwell not, or in mind or heart ; 95
 For never was it wise to take their part.

⁸¹ As with *Canz.* xii., so here the "*envoi*" seems to conceal a hidden meaning. Is this "sect," the members of which alone it is to trust, that of the seekers after wisdom, or Ghibelline idealists? Each theory has its supporters. So the wicked of the last line are either generally those who sin against truth and righteousness, or especially the Guelph Neri of Florence. This stanza, it may be noted, is not found in many MSS., and some editors (Witte) have put the last stanza of *Canz.* xii. in the place which Fraticelli assigns to this.

CANZONE XIV.

THE ANGELS OF THE THIRD HEAVEN.

Voi, che, intendendo, il terzo ciel movete.

YE who with wisdom high the third heaven move,
 Hear ye the reasonings that are in my heart ;
 I may not others tell, they seem so new.
 The sphere whose motion from your might doth start,
 Kind beings that ye are and full of love, 5
 Me to this state in which I now live drew ;
 Whence of the life I lead, an utterance true
 To you might be addressed most worthily.
 Wherefore I pray you that ye give me ear :
 I of my heart to you new tidings bear 10
 How my sad soul breathes there full many a sigh,
 And how a spirit pleads those sighs to bar,
 Which cometh in the rays of your bright star.

As life in my sad heart was wont to be
 A tender thought which oftentimes would go, 15
 And of your Lord and Master seek the feet,
 Where a fair dame it saw all glorious show,
 Of whom it spoke to me so pleasantly,
 That my soul said, "I too would thither fleet."
 Now appears one who bids that thought retreat ; 20

CANZONE XIV.

This *Canzone* has for us the interest of being the first of the fourteen of which the *Convito*, had it been completed, would have been the exposition, and which is accordingly expounded at length in *Conv.* ii. In that work he defends himself against the charge of having transferred the love which he had given to Beatrice to another human object, and explains that the lady of whom the *Canzone* speaks is none other than Philosophy, the daughter of the great Emperor of the Universe. I agree with Witte and Kraft in looking on the allegorical explanation as an afterthought, and hold that the "letter" of a true history is to be found. *V. N.* c. 36-40.

¹ The third heaven is the sphere of Venus, as in *Par.* viii. 1-12 ; *Conv.* ii. 6. And in accordance with Dante's astronomy it is moved by angels, or, more scientifically, by intelligent powers (*Conv.* iv. 19), whose volition suffices for that purpose (*Par.* viii. 37, xxvii. 114). The influence of that planet has made him sorrowful. He will tell them the tale of his woe. A comparison of *V. N.* c. 36 with *Conv.* ii. 2, 13, fixes the date of the *Canzone* between 1292 and 1295, probably in the latter year.

¹⁴ The sweet thought is the memory of Beatrice as now glorified. He would fain draw near to her. But then another thought drives that out. There is a new master-passion. The love of Philosophy (I use the term to distinguish it from the heavenly wisdom of which Beatrice was the representative) is driving out the memory of the past.

And with such great might lords it over me,
 That my heart throbs and brings its grief to light.
 He on another lady turns my sight,
 And saith, "Who seeks true blessedness to see,
 Let him upon the eyes of this dame look,
 If he can sighs and anguish bravely brook."

25

A spirit findeth, hostile to the death,
 That meek thought that was wont to speak to me
 Of a dear angel, who is crowned in Heaven.
 My soul bewails, so great its misery,
 And saith, "Alas! how from me vanisheth
 That piteous thought which me hath comfort given,"
 Speaks of mine eyes, and saith this soul grief-riven,
 "What hour was that such lady them beheld?
 And why believed they not my speech of her?"
 I said, "Needs must he have his station there
 In her bright eyes, who all my peers hath quelled;"
 And it availed not when I her had seen
 That they saw him not, who my death hath been.

30

35

"Thou art not dead, but thou art stupefied,
 O soul of mine, who dost so sadly wail."
 So speaks a spirit filled with gentlest love,
 "For this fair dame who o'er thee doth prevail,
 Hath all thy life so changed and modified,
 That thou fear'st her, so recreant dost thou prove;
 Behold how meek and gracious she doth move,
 How courteous in her greatness, and how wise;
 And in thy thought thy mistress let her be,
 For if thyself thou do not cheat, thou'lt see
 Such wealth of marvels and of mysteries,
 That thou wilt say, 'O Love, mine own true Lord,
 Behold thine handmaid; work thou out thy word.'"

40

45

50

²⁷ Still, however, that memory, as of an angel crowned in heaven, keeps its ground. But then, so far as it does, the new consoling passion withdraws its influence and its joy. So he is in a strait between two. Was it not an evil day when Philosophy drew him from Beatrice? He knows that that new passion slays the peace of those who have resumed the common pleasures and low ambitions of mankind (*Conv.* ii. 16), or who, like himself, are eager to plunge into all mysteries and all knowledge.

⁴⁰ The spirit of Love pleads the cause of Philosophy. It was not death, but fear that oppressed him. The new mistress of his soul had transformed his life, and, if he were faithful to her, he would see yet greater wonders. Then his soul would be able to say, "Behold

Canzon', I deem that they will be but few
 Who will thy meaning rightly understand,
 So difficult and laboured is thy speech : 55
 Whence if, perchance, such fortune thee attend
 That thou thy way to any should'st pursue
 Who seem not 'ware what lore thine accents teach,
 I pray thee then, thou yet some comfort reach,
 By telling them, my tender, darling lamb, 60
 "At least take heed how beautiful I am."

CANZONE XV.

THE MIRACLE OF BEAUTY.

Amor che nella mente mi ragiona.

Love, who doth often with my mind converse,
 In eager longing, of my Lady fair,
 Often of her doth utter things so rare,
 That all my reason goes thereon astray.
 His speech such strains of sweetness doth rehearse, 5
 That my weak soul that listens and doth hear,
 Doth say, "Ah me! for I no power do bear
 To tell what he doth of my Lady say.
 'Tis certain it behoves I put away,
 If I would treat of what I hear of her, 10
 That which my mind fails utterly to reach,
 And much of clearer speech;
 For want of knowledge then would me deter."

thy handmaid; work thou thy will on me" (*Purg.* x. 44). The words are quoted in the last-named passage, however, as an example of the humility which in the later stage of his spiritual life the poet had found to be more precious even than Philosophy. Here again the *Commedia* is the recantation of the *Convito*.

⁵⁵ There is obviously a sense of satisfaction in the thought that the *Canzone* will be "caviare to the general." The poet's desire is to speak what the wise will understand, while even those who fail to grasp the inner meaning cannot fail to admire the beauty of the verse. The *ternata* is translated in the *Preface* to Shelley's *Epipsychidion*.

CANZONE XV.

¹⁻¹⁸ The second of the poems expounded in the *Convito* (B. iii.). As in *Purg.* xxiv. 52, the poet claims the merit of writing as love taught him to write. But he feels the impotence of speech to reproduce what he has thus heard of his beloved one, the Philosophy who now sways his soul. For a time, on which he afterwards looked back with self-reproach and penitence (*Purg.* xxxi. 55-60), the conflict described in *Canz.* xiv. had ceased, and Beatrice was practically superseded and dethroned by the new passion.

Wherefore if these my rhymes be found to fail,
 Which fain a worthy praise would minister, 5
 My feeble mind let all the blame assail,
 And this our speech which hath no power to spell
 All that of her it hears Love often tell.

The Sun, that all the world encompasseth,
 Sees nothing half so lovely any hour, 20
 As when he shines where resteth in her bower
 The Lady for whose praise my tongue Love frees.
 Each spirit high sees her and wondereth,
 And all the tribe that here own Love's sweet power,
 Shall find her presence as their thoughts' high dower, 25
 When Love gives them perception of her peace ;
 So doth her nature Him who gives it please,
 Who aye in her His virtue doth infuse
 Beyond our Nature's utmost claim or plea.

The soul of purity, 30
 Which this great grace of healing power imbues,
 That gift displays, in that which it doth guide,
 For her fair form is that which eyesight views ;
 And still their eyes who in her light abide
 Send envoys to the heart whose wishes rise 35
 In the clear air, and take the form of sighs.

On her God's grace descendeth from on high,
 As on an angel who His presence sees,
 And if a gentle Lady's faith should cease,
 Walk she with her, and see her bearing sweet. 40
 There, where she speaks, doth ever downward fly,
 A heavenly spirit witnessing with these
 How the high power she owns by heaven's decrees

12-36 The parable is so well sustained, that, but for the exposition in *Conv.* iii., we should be half tempted to think that it was Beatrice, and not Philosophy that is spoken of. We have, as in *Prov.* viii. 22-31, *Wisd.* vii. 22-30, a picture of the beauty of Wisdom clad in visible form, whose eyes are the higher and more transcendent truths which she reveals to those who seek her. It is noticeable that the sapiential books of the Bible—Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Wisdom, Ecclesiasticus—are those which he chiefly quotes in the *Convito*. Then he thought that they spoke of the purely intellectual philosophy to which he had devoted himself. Afterwards he learnt to connect them with the higher spiritual wisdom of which not the "*donna gentile*," but Beatrice was the symbol.

37-54 In that Philosophy there is a virtue like that which belongs to the angel who stands in the presence of God, as the Cherubim and Seraphim stand (*Par.* xxi. 92). Whatever there is of gentleness and beauty in human form is but the reflection of her loveliness.

Goes beyond all things that for us are meet.
 The gentle acts wherewith she all doth greet 45
 Go calling upon Love in rivalry,
 With speech that makes him lend a listening ear.

Of her we this may hear,
 "What in fair dame is kind in her we see,
 And she is fair who most resembles her." 50
 And we may hear that this her beauty free
 Helps to gain faith for what doth wonder stir,
 And thus our faith doth confirmation gain
 From her, for this the Eternal did ordain.

Things in her aspect are made manifest 55
 That witness of the bliss of Paradise;
 Of her sweet smile I speak, and beaming eyes,
 Which Love brings there, the place of their desire.
 Our feeble mind by them is all opprest,
 As when the sun on vision weak doth rise : 60
 And since I may not gaze in steadfast wise,
 Needs must I not beyond short speech aspire.
 Her beauty showers down tongues of living fire,
 All animate with spirit good and kind,
 Which is the parent of all noble thought ; 65
 And as with lightning fraught
 They break the innate sins which shame and blind.
 Wherefore, if any lady thinks that less
 Of praise she hath for looks of haughty mind,
 Let her behold this type of lowliness. 70
 She is it who doth humble hearts perverse ;
 She was His thought, who launched the universe.

My Song, it seems thou speak'st in diverse tones
 From speech that came from sister fair of thine ;
 For this fair lady, who with thee doth shine. 75

55-73 In her beauty, her eyes, and her smile there is the joy of Paradise. The vices that cloud the soul perish in her presence. And yet she is the pattern of all lowliness, even while she brings low the perverseness of the proud. The eyes and the smile remind us of Beatrice in *Par.* xxi. 1, xxii. 11, xxiii. 48, but the comparison of the two descriptions leads to the conclusion that what is here said of Philosophy is re-transferred afterwards, in the closing and higher experience, to the diviner Wisdom.

73-90 The reference is to *Ball.* x., in which he had spoken of the mistress of his soul, now identified with Philosophy, as proud and disdainful, as in *Canz.* vi. Dante looks on his poems as forming a sisterhood of song. The explanation of the apparent contradiction is

As lowly, she calls proud and arrogant.
 Thou know'st that heaven is clear and bright alone,
 And in itself nought mars its light divine,
 But for full many a cause these eyes of mine
 Deem the sun's glory dimmed as by a cloud. 80
 Thus, when thy sister calls her stern and proud,
 She thinks not of her as she is in truth,
 But only as to her she doth appear ;
 For my soul lived in fear,
 And feareth still, so that devoid of ruth 85
 She seems, when I perceive she seeth me.
 Thus plead, if any need arise, in sooth,
 And when thou com'st, and she shall look on thee,
 Say thou, "O Lady, if it please thee well,
 I will on every side thy praises tell." 90

CANZONE XVI.

TRUE NOBILITY.

Le dolci rime d' amor, ch' io solia.

THE pleasant rhymes of love which 'twas my care
 To seek out in my mind,
 I now must leave, not that no hope I find
 To turn to them again ;
 But that the mien disdainful and unkind, 5
 Which in my lady fair

that the eye sees what it has the power to see. The sun, or, better perhaps, the starry firmament, seems dim to those whose sight is weak (a touch, it may be, of personal experience, *Conv.* iii. 9), and Wisdom seems stern to those who are yet in the early stages of their search after her. The reader will remember the two faces of Wisdom in Giotto's fresco at Assisi. Comp. also *Ecclus.* iv. 17, 18, and *Ball.* x., n.

CANZONE XVI.

1-20 The third of the *Convito* poems, expounded in *B.* iv. The thought of the reserved and, as it were, disdainful aspect of Wisdom, to which reference had been made in the last stanza of *Cans.* xv., returns, and therefore the poet will for a time cease to sing her praises and turn to another subject, the nature of true nobility. He wishes to show how false is the judgment of the crowds who identify it with wealth. One may trace, if I mistake not, in this change of subject the beginning of the dissatisfaction with the pursuit of Philosophy which uttered itself in the confessions of *Purg.* xxxi. and the joy of the *Paradiso*. He had found himself face to face with problems which he could not solve, and which he afterwards came to look upon as trivial (*Conv.* iv. 2 ; *Par.* xiii. 97-102).

Hath shown itself, hath barred the thoroughfare
 Of wonted speech and plain.
 And since to wait good reason doth constrain,
 I now will lay aside my sweeter style, 10
 Which, when I write of love, pervadeth all,
 And that high worth recall,
 Through which a man grows noble without guile,
 With keen sharp rhymes awhile
 Reproving still the judgment false and vile 15
 Of those who think that true nobility
 In hoarded wealth doth lie;
 And, at the outset on that Lord I call,
 Who makes his dwelling in my Lady's eyes,
 Whereby in her love of herself doth rise. 20

One ruled of old, who thought nobility—
 So he, at least, did deem—
 In ancient wealth was found and high esteem
 With ordered life and fair :
 Another did of poorer wisdom seem, 25
 Who scorned that maxim high,
 And thereof let the latter clause go by,
 Having, perchance, nought there.
 And after such as he all others fare,
 Who reckon noble men by ancestry, 30
 Which for long years hath run through wealthy line.
 And so long such malign,
 False judgment among us hath come to be,
 That him distinguish we
 As noble who can say, "Behold in me 35
 Grandson or son of knight who nobly fought,"
 Though his own worth be nought :
 But basest he to those who truth divine,
 Who sees the road and then doth turn aside,
 Like one who, dead, doth yet on earth abide. 40

21-40 The saying discussed is traditionally referred (we have nothing, however, but the tradition) to the Emperor Frederick II. That saying was but partially true at the best. Others had brought it down to a yet lower level by omitting the condition expressed in its closing words. Ancestry and wealth were believed to be an adequate definition of nobility.

Whoso defined man as "a tree that lives"

First says what is not true,
 And with that falsehood takes defective view :
 May be, he sees no more.
 So he who weighty cares of empire knew, 45
 False definition gives ;
 For first he speaks what's false, and next perceives
 But half the truer lore.
 For neither, as men think, can wealth's full store,
 Or give nobility, or take away, 50
 Because of its own nature it is base.
 For he who paints a face
 Must first *be* that, ere picture it he may :
 Nor can the river sway
 A steadfast tower, as it from far doth stray. 55
 That wealth is vile and incomplete 'tis plain ;
 However much we gain,
 It brings no rest, but heaps up cares apace ;
 Wherefore the soul that upright is and true,
 Their loss with calm and tranquil mind doth view. 60

Nor let men deem a base churl can attain
 To honour true ; or that from churlish sire
 A race may spring that shall to fame aspire :
 This by them stands confest ;
 Thus do their self-confuted proofs retire, 65
 So far as they maintain
 That time to honour true doth appertain,
 As is by them exprest.
 And hence it follows from what they attest
 That all of us or noble are or base, 70
 Or that man never had beginning true :
 But I take not this view,

41-50 The definition is as imperfect as though one should define man as a living tree, which would only be so far true as it predicated life as part of man's being. Riches, as such, can give no real nobleness of character. The comparison that follows indicates Dante's insight into the secret of all completeness in art. The artist who paints must become like that which he depicts, or else he fails. "Fra Angelico could not paint the fiery glow of passion, nor Michael Angelo the joy of devout resignation" (*Witter*). The other simile compares true nobility to the tower standing on a rock, past which the stream of earthly fortune and its chances flow by, leaving it unshaken. Comp. *H.* vii. 61-96.

71-80 The other part of the definition is now discussed. Does nobility depend on a long line of ancestors? To assert this is to run counter to facts. The common man may rise ; the

Nor even they, if they have Christian grace.
 To minds in healthy case,
 'Tis therefore clear their maxims have no base, 75
 And therefore them as false I still reprove,
 And far from them remove,
 And now will, as I think, proclaim anew,
 What is the true Noblesse, and whence it springs,
 And what the notes that name of 'noble' brings. 80

I say each virtue, in inception,
 Comes from a single root,
 Virtue, I mean, with happiness as fruit,
 In all its actions right ;
 This is—so with our Ethics following suit— 85
 Right choice to habit grown,
 The which doth dwell in the true mean alone,
 And such words brings to light.
 I say that Noblesse doth, by reason's might,
 Connote all good in him of whom 'tis said ; 90
 As baseness evermore connoteth ill :
 And such a virtue still
 Gives knowledge of itself to those that seek ;
 Since 'neath the self-same head
 Both meet, in one effect accomplished ; 95
 Whence needs must be that this from that should spring,
 Or each some third cause bring ;
 But if this with the other like worth fill,
 And more, that other rather springs from this :
 Proceed we then on this hypothesis. 100

high-born man may fall. Yes ; there must have been a time in every family when its founder first rose to greatness, and became noble though he had no noble ancestors. If the noble and the vulgar are so only by heredity, then we are all of us gentle or simple by birth ; but that assumption is at variance with the doctrine of the unity of the human race as descended from Adam, and therefore no Christian can receive it. Dante had learnt that lesson from his favourite, Boethius (iii. 6) :—

*"Omne hominum genus in terris
 Simili surgit ab ortu,
 Unus enim pater est,
 Unus qui cuncta ministrat."*

The two false definitions being cleared away, the ground is open for a truer definition.

81-100 That definition is found in the thought that wherever there is virtue there we recognise nobility. It does not follow, however, that the definition is convertible. There may be a nobility of character, as in youth or maiden, in whom virtue is not yet ethically complete, whose modest shyness is, in fact, not a virtue, but almost a defect. Let no man, therefore, boast that he is noble because he has a long pedigree. God alone gives the true nobility, and those who have it are sharers, so to speak, in the Divine nature.

Noblesse wherever virtue dwells is found,
 Virtue where noblesse, no ;
 E'en as 'tis heaven where'er the sun doth go,
 Though not so the converse ;
 And we see ladies in their youth's fresh glow, 105
 With this great blessing crowned,
 So far as they in shamefastness abound,
 From virtue yet diverse.
 Hence must proceed, as from black cometh perse,
 From this last every virtue singular, 110
 Or from the parent-stock of all the host.
 Wherefore let no man boast,
 Saying, "By descent her fellowship I share,"
 For all but gods they are
 Who have such grace with every fault afar. 115
 For God alone bestows it on the mind,
 Which He doth perfect find,
 Resting in Him ; so that in few at most
 The seed of perfect blessedness is sown,
 Planted by God in souls to fitness grown. 120

101-120 The beauty of the *Canzone* rises to its highest point, and we have an ideal picture of a noble life in all its successive stages, the obedience and modesty of childhood, the temperance and manliness of youth, the wisdom, justice, munificence of maturity, the contemplative devotion of old age. In the last we trace an echo of what he had learnt from Cic. *de Senectute*. The thought of the re-wedding of the soul to God meets us in *Purg.* xxiii. 81.

141-146 The "envoi" bids the *Canzone* speed to the mistress of the poet's soul, *i.e.*, to Philosophy. She will recognise its truth.

We are so familiar with the sentiments embodied in this poem, that they come to us almost as commonplace platitudes. We must put ourselves into the poet's position, as standing apart, on the one side, from the old feudal nobility of Florence, as represented by the Uberti, Rusticucci, and others, and, on the other, from the *nouveaux riches*, represented by the Bardi, the Cerchi, and the Frescobaldi, to understand how he may have seemed to himself to be uttering a new or neglected truth with almost prophetic solemnity. In reaching that truth he had to renounce not only the dominant falsehood of his time, but even the authority of his great master, Aristotle (*Pol.* iii. 12, 13), who assigns to ancestral wealth (*ἀρχαίωνλουρία*) a far larger share in nobility than Dante does, and to fall back upon what we have learnt to call the "flesh and blood" argument of the brotherhood of mankind, as children of the same earthly and the same heavenly Father. If there was any special nobleness in any man that raised him above his fellows, it was the gift of God. In *Conv.* iv. 20 he refers to his master, Guido Guinicelli, as teaching the same truth in the Sonnet, "*Al cor gentile ripara sempre amore*." In doing so he follows Aquinas (*Summ.* ii. 2. 134, 3), where he ceased to follow Aristotle (*Osan.* pp. 397-398). Comp. also Ægidius Columna (*De Regim. Principum*, iii. 2, 8). Two of his favourite poets, Ovid and Juvenal, were probably among his teachers in this matter, and we can scarcely fail to recognise echoes of their words in Dante's teaching. Thus Ovid (*Met.* xiii. 140)—

"*At genus, et proceros, et quæ non fecimus ipsi,
 Vix ea nostra voco.*"

Or Juvenal, *Sat.* viii. 272-276—

"*Et tamen, ut longe repetas longæque revoloas,
 Nomen, ab infami gentem deductis asylo.
 Majorum primus quisquis fuit ille tuorum
 Aut pastor fuit, aut illud, quod dicere nolo.*"

Or again Juvenal, *Sat.* viii. 20—

"*Tota licet veteres exornent undique cere
 Atria, nobilitas sola est atque unica virtus.*"

The soul whom that high goodness doth adorn,
 Doth not its presence hide,
 For from the first she, as the body's bride,
 Herself till death displays.
 Obedient, gentle, modest, far from pride, 125
 Is she in life's young morn ;
 And decks herself with many a grace new-born,
 In Wisdom's perfect ways ;
 Constant and temperate in life's young days,
 Full of sweet love and praiseful courtesy, 130
 And finds in loyal deeds her sole delight ;
 In age's gathering night,
 Prudent and just and of her bounty free ;
 And in her soul joys she
 To hear or tell how worthy others be. 135
 And then she reaches life's fourth period
 Re-married unto God,
 Waiting her end in contemplation's light,
 And blesseth all the seasons of the past.
 See now how many have in lies been cast ! 140

In connexion with Dante's other writings and with his life, we may note (1) that he has risen to a higher level of thought than that of which we find traces in *H.* xv. 77 ; (2) that many of his examples of goodness and greatness seem specially chosen to illustrate the ideal for which he is here contending, as, *e.g.*, Romeo in *Par.* vi. 128-142, Pier Pettinagno in *Purg.* xiii. 128 ; (3) that he speaks in the same tone, as of one who had conquered an error under the power of which he had himself at one time lived, in *Purg.* xiii. 133-138 ; *Par.* xvi. 1-9. We may also, I think, reasonably conjecture that the *Canzone* was written when he was looking for the appearance of Henry VII. as the restorer of an ideal empire, by the virtues the absence of which had made Frederick II. its destroyer, and that it had a direct political purpose in itself, and yet more as expounded in *Conv.* iv., as setting before that Emperor the principles on which he was to act. If, with Fraticelli in *O. M.* iii. 31-33, we infer from *Conv.* iv. 3, 6, 16, that the *Canzone* was written before 1300—and I must own that his arguments are of considerable weight—then we must look on the manifesto as addressed to an ideal ruler such as he contemplated when he wrote the *De Monarchia* or *H.* i. 101-104. Lastly, it is interesting to note the fact that few if any of Dante's minor poems have so impressed themselves on the minds of the generation that followed. Comp. *e.g.*, Cecco d'Ascoli (*L' Acerba*, ii. 12, quoted in *Frat. O. M.*, i. p. 190), and our own Chaucer, who quotes from it as follows :—

“ Here may ye see well how that genterie
 Is not annexed to possession.

For God it wot, men may ful often find
 A lordes son do shame and vilanie,
 And he that would have prise of genterie
 For he was boren of a gentil hous,
 And had his elders noble and vertuous,
 And n' ill himself do no gentil dedes,
 Ne folowe his gentil auncester that ded is,
 He n' is not gentil, be he duk or erl ;
 For villain's sinful dedes make a cherl ;
 For gentilesse n' is but the renomee
 Of thine auncestres, for hir high bountie,
 Which is a strange thing to thy persone ;
 Thy gentilesse cometh from God alone.

—*Wife of Bath's Tale.*

Thou, 'gainst those erring ones, my Song, shalt speed,
 And when thou art, indeed,
 There where our lady fair her home doth find,
 Let not thine errand from her hidden be;
 Tell her in verity,
 "I of thy true friend come to speak my mind."

145

CANZONE XVII.

VIRTUS SOLA NOBILITAS.

Poesia ch' Amor del tutto m'ha lasciato.

SINCE Love hath ceased my longing soul to fill,
 Not by my choice of will,
 For still a gladder state I could not know,
 But that he pitied so
 That anguish of my heart—
 To listen to my wail he could not bear.
 Thus, disenamoured, I my song will trill
 Against that form of ill
 Which will its speech in terms perverse bestow,
 And call the base and low
 By name of worthiest part,
 The name of "gallantry," which sounds so fair,
 That worthy of the rare
 Imperial robe it makes him whom it sways.
 This the true flag displays

5

10

15

CANZONE XVII.

1-19 In its form this *Canzone* presents a singular complication. Each stanza of sixteen lines is divided into four sub-stanzas, the first of four lines, the other three of five lines each. In each of the first two, after two terminal rhymes at the beginning of the sub-stanza, the rhyme is repeated, as in the translation, in the middle of the third line. In the *V. E.* (ii. 12) Dante refers to this *Canzone*, obviously with a special satisfaction, as giving the effect in this peculiar rhyming of what he calls an "answering echo." In its matter it is a kind of corollary from *Cans. xvi.* Men have false notions on other matters besides nobility. They call evil good and good evil, and give the name of gallantry, which ought to include virtue and liberality, to its counterfeits. We are reminded of Tennyson's protest against those who thus abuse the "grand old name of gentleman."

1-3 The lines find a parallel in the old Latin hymn—

"*Blandus hic dolor est,
 Qui meus amor est;*"

and in the lines of Guido of Arezzo (*Cans. xxxvi.*)—

"*Tutto 'l dolor ch' io mai portai fu gioja.*"—(Witts.)

Which indicates where Virtue hath her home,
 Whence I am sure if her my speech defend
 E'en as I apprehend,
 That once more Love with favouring grace shall come.

There are who, squandering all their wealth away, 20
 Believe that thus they may
 Their way make thither where the good abide,
 Who after death provide
 A home within the mind
 Of whosoever owneth wisdom true ; 25
 But to please good men this is not the way ;
 For greed as wisdom they
 Display, and thus would 'scape full many an ill,
 To th' error cleaving still,
 Of them and of their kind, 30
 In whom false teaching doth their lore imbue.
 Who will not folly view
 In banquets rich and light luxurious play,
 And proud and rich array,
 As if for sale where buyers are unwise ? 35
 Not by his dress the wise a man's worth know—
 This is but outward show—
 But praise true wisdom and brave courtesies.

Others there are who, by the ready sneer,
 Would fain appear, 40
 Wit-clear, and prompt in ready intellect,
 To hearers who are tricked
 As they behold them smile
 At what their mind doth fail to understand.
 They speak in words that show of wisdom wear, 45
 And count it dear,

²⁰⁻³⁰ So men looked on prodigality as a sign of generosity. Dante, as in *H.* vii. 25-30, and in the teaching of Statius (*Purg.* xii. 31-45), saw that extremes meet, and that it stood on the same footing of guilt as the avarice which was apparently its opposite (*Conv.* iv. 27). What good was there in spending money in banquets or dress. Manners, not clothes, make the man. Line 35 seems to point to the Italian practice of decorating animals that are exposed for sale in a public market, as, *e.g.*, in the Campo Vaccino at Rome.

³⁹⁻³⁷ So, too, men passed for wise because they could smile superciliously. That might win the praise of the vulgar, but they know not what true praise or true love is. Their speech is cynical, their pleasures base. To the women who are worthy of love they are little better than beasts that have no understanding.

To hear themselves with vulgar praises decked.
 Love ne'er did them affect
 With ladies' love awhile :
 In converse they all base jests have at hand, 50
 Ne'er would their foot have spanned
 One pace for lady's sake, in knightly wise :
 But as to robberies
 The thief, haste they to steal some pleasure base ;
 But not in ladies yet doth fade and die 55
 True sense of gallantry,
 That they should seem to lose all wisdom's trace.

Virtue that leaves the straight path is not pure,
 And hence of blame is sure ;
 Endure she cannot when we virtue need, 60
 In those the good in deed,
 By the true Spirit led,
 Or habit which on Wisdom lays fast hold.
 Therefore, if praise of it in knight endure,
 Its cause we find in ure, 65
 Full sure, of many mixed things ; since indeed
 It doth with one succeed,
 With others falleth dead.
 But Virtue pure its place in all doth hold.
 Delight, that doth enfold 70
 Within it, love, hath thus the work perfected.
 And by this last directed
 Is gallantry, and hath her being there,
 E'en as the sun, which gathers in its might
 Round it, both warmth and light, 75
 Together with its form of beauty fair.
 Though star with star should, with commingled ray,
 Turn gallantry away
 To stray, as much and more than I may tell,
 Yet I, who know it well, 80
 Thanks to a gentle one,

50-75 Virtue that leaves the true path is not pure. What is needed for its perfection, either as in the devout life or as in that of the students of wisdom, is the union of rectitude, and love, and pleasantness.

77-96 Though the aspect of the heavens is against true gallantry, yet the poet, who has seen it embodied in one he loved (obviously a reference to Beatrice), will not hold his peace. He

Who showed them to me in each action fair,
 Will not be silent, for I should display
 Base soul of mire and clay,
 Always, and with her enemies seem one. 85
 So I from this time on
 Will with song subtly rare,
 Thereof speak truth, not knowing who will heed ;
 But this I swear indeed,
 By him whose name is Love, of bliss compact, 90
 That virtue without act
 Can ne'er acquire the guerdon of true praise,
 Therefore if this hold good in argument,
 As all will give assent,
 'Twere virtue, and with virtue knit always. 95

To the great planet it is like, whose might
 From sunrise bright,
 Till night, when it conceals its glorious ray,
 And where its bright beams play,
 Pours life and strength below, 100
 As that on which it shines may bear its power ;
 So she, in scorn of each unworthy wight
 Who, in false light,
 True knight appears in form that so deceives,
 That fruits belie their leaves, 105
 Since ill deeds from them flow,
 Like gifts upon the gentle heart doth shower ;
 Quickly with life doth dower,
 With solace fair, and lovely manners new,
 Which each hour brings to view ; 110
 He who takes her takes virtue as his guide.
 O ye false knights, perverse and craven ye,
 With her at enmity,
 Who like the stars' king shineth far and wide.

knows not whom his song will reach. His hearers may be but few, but he must bear his witness that there is no true praise but that which is won by virtue. Witte inverts the order of the fourth and fifth stanzas.

98-114 True virtue is like the sun (reckoned in mediæval astronomy among the planets), shedding light and heat all around (*Par.* xxii. 116). She scorns all counterfeits of good, and all unworthy knights are enemies of her who is as the sun in its glory.

He freely takes and gives whom she doth own, 115
 Nor is with grief o'erdone ;
 The sun grieves not when it to stars gives light,
 Nor when from them aright
 Comes help for its employ,
 But each therein finds ever bliss renewed. 120
 To wrath he never is by words urged on ;
 But those alone,
 Are known by him, that are both good and right,
 And all his speech is bright.
 Dear for himself is he and full of joy, 125
 Desired by wise and good ;
 For of the viler brood
 He prizes equally the praise and blame ;
 Nor, through the loftiest fame,
 Swells high with pride, but when the time arrives 130
 When it is fit that he his courage show,
 There praise for him doth flow :
 Far otherwise than this are most men's lives.

CANZONE XVIII.

FREEDOM AND BONDAGE.

Doglia mi reca nello core ardire.

GRIEF brings within my heart a spirit bold
 To help the will which loveth all that's true ;
 So, Ladies, if to you

115-123 The giving and receiving of l. 115 are concerned not with money, but with knowledge. Dante may have had in his thoughts Augustine's application of the words "God loveth a cheerful giver" (*De Catech. Rud.* c. 14). *Comp. Conv.* i. 9. He in whom virtue dwells gives as the sun gives to the planets and the fixed stars, both of which were thought to derive from him their light, and grieves not, but rejoices in all reciprocity of good. He is not easily led to wrath, is dear to the wise, cares little for the praise or blame of the unwise, is not easily puffed up, shows his goodness to those who are worthy of it (*H.* ii. 61 ; *Purg.* xi. 100-120). Witte finds a parallel in the counsel given by St. Philip Neri, "*Sperare in seipso.*" Alas ! the men that are now do just the opposite of all this.

CANZONE XVIII.

1-21 The preacher now takes beauty as his text, and moralises much as he had done on gallantry. He may seem to say a strange thing, but if beauty is given to woman, and valour to man, that love may make of the twain one, then it were well that women should hide their beauty and turn away from love, for true virtue, as things are, is rarely to be found.

I speak what seems against mankind as thrown,
 Marvel thereat the less ; 5
 But learn your low desires full cheap to hold :
 For beauty, which through Love in you hath grown
 For virtue true alone,
 By his decree of old was fashioned ;
 Against which ye transgress. 10
 I say to you who Love's great power confess,
 That if your dower be beauty,
 As ours is virtuous duty,
 And unto him is given to make both one,
 Ye ought all love to shun, 15
 And cover what of beauty is your share,
 For that it hath not virtue, love's true sign.
 Ah, where drifts speech of mine ?
 Fair scorn do I opine,
 Were rightly honoured in a lady fair, 20
 Who should her beauty banish from her care.

Man from himself hath virtue driven away,
 True man no more, but brute in man's estate :
 Ah, God ! what wonder great,
 That man should wish from lord to slave to fall, 25
 From life to death descend !
 Virtue, to her Creator subject aye,
 Obeys Him, giving Him true praise in all,
 Ladies, that Love may call
 Her as enrolled, where his true subjects wend, 30
 In His blest court on high.
 From the fair gates she cometh cheerfully,
 And to her mistress turns,
 Goes gladly and sojourns,
 And with great joy fulfils her vassalage. 35
 Through her short pilgrimage
 She keeps, adorns, enriches what she finds,

Dante refers to this *Canzone* in the *V. E.* ii. 2 as an example of his work as the "poet of righteousness," and apparently (*Conv.* i. 8) it was intended to have been the ground-work of *Conv.* xv. had the poet completed that work. It is largely based upon Seneca, *De Beneficiis*, ii. 2.

22-23 Yes ; man has become brute (*Conv.* ii. 7), the master has become the slave. Virtue is ever true to her Creator, ready for any service, caring not for death, a possession that is a perpetual joy.

And warreth so with death, he brings no fear :
 O Maiden pure and dear,
 Shaped in the heavenly sphere, 40
 Thou only makest noble ; proof is this
 That thou the treasure art that bringeth bliss.
 Slave, not of true lord, but of slave most base,
 He makes himself who from this Master strays.
 Hear now how dear he pays, 45
 If ye count up his loss on either side,
 Who passeth virtue by :
 This master-slave works out such foul disgrace,
 That the clear eyes that mental light provide
 Through him their vision hide, 50
 So that he needs must tread in others' ways,
 Where madness meets his eye.
 But that my words with profit may apply,
 From whole I pass to part,
 And to constructive art 55
 More simple, that they tell an easier tale ;
 For seldom 'neath a veil
 Doth speech obscure approach the mind aright,
 And hence with you my wish is to speak plain.
 This do I for your gain— 60
 Not mine, I must explain—
 That ye may hold each churl in deep despite ;
 For too soon likeness springeth from delight.
 He who is slave is like a man who goes
 In his lord's track, and knows not where it leads, 65
 But in dark path proceeds ;
 So fares the miser seeking money still,
 Which over all doth reign :
 Swift runs the miser, swifter flies repose

43-63 Look on that picture and then on this. To serve Mammon is to be a "*servo signor*," the slave of a slave, and to find him the hardest of all taskmasters. That he may rescue men from such a bondage the poet will descend to particulars and use all plainness of speech.

64-64 He who seeks to satisfy himself with riches attempts that which is impossible. He is trying to grasp the infinite, for "*Crescit amor nummi quantum ipsa pecunia crescit*," *Juv.* xiv. 139 (*Conv.* iii. 15). And when Death, the great leveller, comes, what does he find then? He can take nothing of all his heaped-up treasures into the region behind the veil. We are reminded of the old epitaph—
 "What I gave I have,
 What I spent I had,
 What I kept I lost."

(O blinded soul, that neither can nor will
 Discern its wishes ill !),
 With that heaped hoard which every hour exceeds,
 And doth no goal attain.
 Lo, they reach him who levelling doth reign :
 Tell me, what hast thou won,
 Blind miser, all undone ?
 Answer, if other answer be than nought.
 With curse thy couch is fraught,
 Which flatters thee with foolish dreams of night ;
 Curs'd is thy wasted bread,
 Less lost, if dogs it fed ;
 At morn and eve thy tread,
 Was prompt to gather, and with both hands grip
 What fleets so swiftly from thine ownership.

 As wealth is gained without proportion due,
 So is it without due proportion kept.
 This is it which hath swept
 Many to bondage, and if one repent,
 'Tis not without great strife.
 O Death, O Fortune, what is it ye do ?
 Why not set free the wealth which is not spent ?
 If thus, for whom is't meant ?
 I know not ; we within a sphere are swept
 Which ruleth all our life.
 Reason that fails to check with faults is rife.
 Does he say, " I am bound " ?
 What poor excuse is found
 In this for ruler whom a slave commands !
 Nay, doubly base these bands,
 If well ye mark where my hand shows the way.
 False to yourselves, to others harsh, are ye,
 Who see men, wandering bare,
 O'er hills and marshes fare,
 Men, before whom all vice hath fled away,
 While ye heap rich robes on your mire and clay.

98-106 The bondage of the avaricious is the basest of all bondage. No one gets so little out of his wealth as he. He sees those of whom the world is not worthy wandering hungry and naked—(do we trace the feelings of the exile forced to "solicit the cold hand of charity" and to "solicit it in vain" ? *Purg.* xi. 133-138 ; *Par.* xvii. 58)—and he clothes himself not even decently, but with vile apparel.

The miser's eyes on purest virtue fall,
 Virtue, who doth her foes to peace invite,
 With lure full clear and bright,
 To draw them to her, but no good it brings,
 For still he shuns the bait. 110
 Then after many a turn and many a call,
 The food to him, so great her care, she flings,
 Yet spreads he not his wings;
 And if he comes when she hath vanished quite,
 His trouble seems as great. 115
 As if he gave not; so for him doth wait
 No praise to kindness due:
 I will that these my words be heard by you:
 One with delay and one with vain parade,
 And one with looks in shade, 120
 Turns what he gives to bargain sold so dear,
 As he knows only who such purchase pays.
 Wilt know if his wound frays?
 Who takes he so dismays,
 Less bitter 'twere to meet a simple No: 125
 And others and himself the miser woundeth so.

Thus, ladies, have I laid before you bare,
 One limb of that vile race that looks on you,
 That wroth ye may them view.
 But more unsightly still is that concealed, 130
 Yea, far too foul to tell.
 Of each 'tis true that each sin gathers there,
 For friendship still in oneness is revealed;
 And leaves that Love doth yield
 Spring from the root of other blessing true; 135

108-128 The sensitiveness of the poet shows itself again. He can tell how little the avaricious man cares for all the attractions by which Virtue seeks to win him; how he can mar even his gifts, such as they are, by a sourness or an ostentation that would make a refusal almost less bitter than the gift (*Purg.* xvii. 59; *Par.* xvii. 58-60). Even Can Grande's liberality may have been marred by his want of considerate sympathy. The imagery of ll. 109-113, reminds us of the similitudes from falconry in the *Commedia* (*H.* xvii. 127, xxii. 130; *Purg.* xix. 64; *Par.* xix. 34).

127-147 Nor is this all. As every virtue carries with it the seeds of other virtues, so the love of money is the root of all evil, and all other vices go with it; and the love of such a man is nothing better than a brute appetite. Woe for the woman who commits herself to such a man, and thinks that love is a plant which can grow elsewhere than in the garden of right reason. Witte rejects the closing stanza as spurious. A v. l. gives "*Giovane Contessa*" for "*Giovanna, Cortese*." We are in any case left to conjecture who "*Bianca*" was.

Since like loves like indeed
 Hear how to my conclusion I proceed ;
 Who to be fair doth deem
 A good, must never dream,
 That she is loved indeed by such as these ; 140
 But if 'mong ills we please
 To reckon beauty, she may trust it well,
 Naming as love a brutal appetite.
 May such dame perish quite
 Who should her beauty bright 145
 From natural goodness for such cause repel,
 Nor deem love doth in Reason's garden dwell !

 Not far, my Canzon', doth a lady dwell,
 Of our dear land the child,
 Wise, beautiful, and mild ; 150
 All call on her, yet none may her discern :
 When they her name would learn,
 Bianca, Vanna, courteous calling her.
 Go thou thy way to her in meekness drest,
 There first thy course arrest ; 155
 To her first manifest
 Who thou art, and for what I bid thee stir ;
 Then at her hest be thou a follower.

 CANZONE XIX.

THE THREE EXILES.

Tre donne intorno al cor mi son venute.

THREE ladies meet together round my heart,
 And sit outside its gate ;
 Within, Love holds his state,

CANZONE XIX.

The *Canzone* that follows takes its place among the noblest of Dante's lyrics, and deserves, perhaps, Fraticelli's praise as the noblest of all Italian poems of that form.

↳ The three ladies that present themselves in the poet's vision have been differently identified as Justice, Generosity, and Temperance, or as the three forms of Righteousness, natural, political, and religious, or the Law of Nature, the Law of Moses, and the Law of Grace. I incline to the first interpretation. Rossetti, as might be expected, sees in them

And lords it o'er my life with sovran sway :
 So fair are they, and with such winning art, 5
 That this lord, strong and great,
 Who in my heart doth wait,
 To tell of them scarce knoweth what to say.
 Each one of them seems full of sore dismay,
 Like one who is to weary exile borne, 10
 By this world left forlorn,
 Whom nobleness and virtue nought avail.
 There was—so runs their tale—
 A time when all men loved them and did bless,
 Now with them all are wroth, or pass them by. 15
 So they, in loneliness,
 Are come as those that do a friend's house seek,
 For well they know he's there of whom I speak.

One mourns and wails in many a piteous tone,
 And on her hand doth pose, 20
 Like a dissevered rose ;
 Her naked arm, the pillar of her woe,
 Feels the tear-gems that from her cheeks flow down ;
 The other hand half hides
 The face where grief abides ; 25
 Unshod, unzoned, she still seems lady fair.
 Soon as Love saw beneath the garment's tear
 That form whereof 'tis better not to speak,
 He, wroth, yet pitying, meek,
 Of herself questioned her, and that her woe. 30
 "O thou, whom few do know,"

the Templars, the Albigenses, and the Ghibellines (*Spir. Antip.*, pp. 177-179); Keil, innocence, the love of God, and the love of man. The *Canzone*, it should be noted, names the first as Righteousness (*Drittura*); the others are not named, but are spoken of as respectively daughter and grand-daughter of the first. This suggests the thought either (1) that generosity and temperance have their birth in justice, or (2) of the development and education of mankind by three successive manifestations in the Law of Nature, the Law of Moses, and the Law of Christ.

9-15 *Comp. Purg.* vi. 88, xvi. 97, for a picture of like degeneracy.

27 The boldness of the imagery (comp. the same phrase in *Purg.* xxv. 43) startles us, but is, after all, Biblical (*Isai.* iii. 17; *Ezek.* xvi. 37). Men treat Righteousness or Purity, or whatever other virtue may be symbolised, as if she were the vilest object of their scorn. Love, however, looks on with wrath, and Righteousness claims him as her next of kin. Possibly there may be a reference to the myth that Astræa, the symbol of righteousness, was, like Venus, a daughter of Jupiter, or to the other mythos which made Nemesis and Diké the daughters of Themis.

She answered, in a voice all choked with sighs,
 "Our nature bids us that to thee we go.

I whose grief deepest lies,
 Thy mother's sister, am named Righteousness, 33
 How poor I am, let robes and zone confess."

When she had thus her name and state made known,
 Great grief and shame inspired
 My Lord, and he inquired
 Who were the other two that with her came. 40
 And she, who was to weep so ready shown,
 Soon as his speech she heard,
 To greater grief was stirred,
 And said, "Dost thou for mine eyes feel no shame?"
 And then began: "The Nile, as known to fame, 45
 Forth from its fountain flows, a little stream,
 There where the sun's hot beam
 Robs the parched earth of willow's foliage green;
 By waters pure and clean
 I brought her forth who standeth at my side, 50
 And with fair locks to dry her tears is seen;
 And she, my child and pride,
 Herself beholding in the fountain clear,
 Brought forth the third who standeth not so near."

Love paused awhile through sighs that from him part, 55
 And then with tender eyes,
 Where erst wild thoughts did rise,
 He greets the sisters three disconsolate.
 And after taking of each kind a dart,
 "Lift up your heads," he cries, 60
 "Behold the arms I prize:
 See how disuse their brightness doth abate.

⁴⁵ We ask why Dante assigns to the second of the three virtues a birthplace near the sources of the Nile. Possibly it was thought of as the centre of the world's commerce, and therefore as the birthplace of the *jus gentium*. More probably the mediæval geography of Fazio degli Uberti (*Dittam.* v. 29) may throw some light on it. He describes those sources under the name Gion (the Gihon of *Gen.* ii. 13), and so the sources of the Nile are connected with the earthly Paradise and with the natural virtues that belong to it. So in *Eccles.* xxiv. 27, "Gehon" (Vulg., but "Nile" in Luther) is named as an ideal picture of the glories of Wisdom. The thought is therefore identical with that of *Purg.* i. 23. Men have abandoned the virtues of the Paradise life, and those virtues are strangers and pilgrims on the earth.

⁶⁰ Even Love's arrows, possibly the two arrows of gold and lead (*Ovid*), are blunted through long disuse. He has, however, the thought that he and the virtues who claim k.n.

Bounty and Temperance, and the rest cognate,
 Of our high blood, must needs a-begging go ;
 Wherefore, if this be woe, 65
 Let those eyes weep, those lips to wail it learn,
 Whom most it doth concern,
 Who dwell beneath the rays of such a heaven ;
 Not ours, who to the eternal Rock may turn ;
 For, be we now sore driven, 70
 We yet shall live, and yet shall find a race
 Who with this dart shall each dark stain efface."

And I, who hear, as told in speech divine,
 How exiles, great as these,
 Are grieved, yet find some ease, 75
 This my long banishment as honour hold ;
 And if man's judgment, or fate's ordered line,
 Will that the world should learn
 White flowers to black to turn,
 To fall among the good with praise is told. 80
 And but that I no more the star behold
 Which, now, far off removed from my gaze,
 Once burnt me with its blaze,
 Light should I deem the burdens that oppress.
 But this fire burns not less, 85
 And has already eaten flesh and bone,
 So that death's key upon my heart doth press.
 Hence, though I guilt should own,
 Many a month since that guilt is gone and spant,
 If guilt but dieth soon as men repent. 90

ship with him are eternal. The two virtues named indicate an Aristotelian rather than a theological classification (Aristot. *Eth. Nic.* ii. 7 ; *Conv.* iv. 17). Men may suffer, but they remain, and they heed not the scorn of men. Comp. *H.* vii. 94.

⁶⁹ That thought sustains the exiled poet. He too has his feet planted on the Rock of Ages. Though the white flowers may be turned to black (possibly, but only possibly, an allusive reference to the Bianchi, who were unfaithful to the ideal monarchy with which Dante had identified himself, and had joined the Guelph Neri, comp. *H.* ii. 128), yet he could glory in his loneliness and his sufferings (*Par.* xvii. 61-66). The sharpest pang was that he was still exiled from the city of his birth, which he loved with so passionate a love (*H.* xix. 47 ; *Par.* xxv. 1-5). Apparently that love led him to a hypothetical confession of his guilt, which stands in marked contrast to the well-known letter in which he refuses the humiliating conditions of the offered amnesty (vol. i. p. cxix.) The state of things implied seems to point to a time before 1309, when the hope of a return to Florence had become faint, and Henry VII. had not yet appeared on the scene to rekindle it.

⁹¹ The *Tornata* with which the *Canzone* ends seems to justify almost any amount of mystical interpretation, and so finds a parallel in *H.* ix. 61-63. Whether the meaning that lies below the surface is moral or political, whether the "friends of virtue" are those of spiritual

My Song, let no man on thy robes lay hands,
 To see what lady fair hides from all eyes :
 Let parts unveiled suffice ;
 The sweeter fruit within to all deny,
 To which hot hands draw nigh. 95
 And if it chance that thou on one dost light
 The friend of virtue, and to thee he cry,
 Clothe thee in colours bright,
 Then show thyself to him, that loving heart
 May long for flower that shows so fair a part. 100

CANZONE XX.

LAUDES FLORENTIÆ.

O patria, degna de trionfal fama.

DEAR country, worthy of triumphal fame,
 Mother of high-souled sons,
 Thy sister's grief thine own is far above :
 He, of thy children, feeleth grief and shame,—
 Hearing what traitorous ones 5
 Do in thee,—more, as he the more doth love.
 Ah me ! how prompt ill-doers are to move
 In thee, for ever, plotting treachery,
 With squint and envious eye,
 Showing thy people still the false for true. 10
 Lift up the sinking hearts, and warm their blood !
 Upon the traitor's brood
 Let judgment fall, that so with praises due
 That grace may dwell in thee, which now complains,
 Wherein all good its source and home attains. 15

discernment, who can discover a profound ethical significance, the secret beauty hidden from the eyes of the profane by the veil of symbolism, or a secret society of the Illuminati, Freemason, Carbonari type, readers will probably decide according to their theories. As elsewhere, I incline to the simpler, and, as it seems to me, more natural interpretation.

CANZONE XX.

I. The "*patria*" is not Italy as a whole, but, as l. 3 shows, the city, the "sister of Rome," which was the poet's fatherland. The poem belongs obviously to his exile, but whether before or after Henry VII.'s campaign is open to conjecture. The tone is a little less bitter than that of *Purg.* vi. 145, or of the letter written to the Florentines (vol. i. p. cvi.) after Henry had appeared on the scene.

Thou reigned'st happy in the fair past days,
 When each that was thine heir
 Sought that all virtues might thy pillars be ;
 Home of true peace and mother of all praise,
 Thou in one faith sincere 20
 Wert blest, and with the sisters four and three.
 And now those fair forms have abandoned thee,
 In mourning clad, with vices all o'erdone,
 Thy true Fabricii gone :
 Haughty and vile, of true peace deadly foe ; 25
 Dishonoured one, hot faction mirroring still,
 Since Mars thy soul doth fill ;
 Thou doom'st true souls to Antenôra's woe,
 Who follow not the widowed lily's spear,
 And those who love thee most have most to fear. 30

Thin out that evil baleful root in thee,
 Nor pity thou thy sons,
 Who have thy fair flowers made all foul and frail.
 And will thou that the virtues victors be,
 So that thy faithful ones, 35
 Now hidden, rise with right, and sword in hand,
 Follow where still Justinian's beacons stand,
 And thine unrighteous and revengeful laws
 Correct, as wisdom draws,
 That they may gain the praise of heaven and earth. 40
 Then with thy riches honour and endow
 What sons best homage show,

II. The praises of the "good old times" remind us of *Par.* xv., xvi. The *seven ladies*, i.e., the four cardinal virtues of natural ethics and the three supernatural graces, remind us of *Purg.* i. 23, xxxi. 103, 111, xxix. 121, and may so far point to the same period. So the reference to the "Fabricii" (who here stand for the Bianchi) finds a parallel in *Purg.* xx. 25. To punish in Antenôra (*H.* xxxii. 88) is to treat as traitors. The "lily" of Florence is "widowed," not, as some have thought, because her chief leader, Corso Donati (?) or Philip the Fair (?), was dead, but because, like Israel, she had forsaken her true Lord, forgotten the "first love of her espousals" (*Jer.* ii. 2). *Lam.* i. 1 (quoted by Dante, *V. N. c.* 29; *Ep.* ix. 2) was still apparently in his thoughts.

III. The "flower" implies an allusive reference to the name *Florence*. The name of Justinian, as in the magnificent episode of *Par.* vi. 1-90, is, for Dante, the symbol of wise and impartial legislation, standing out in marked contrast to the decree of banishment, forfeiture, attainder, death by burning, which had been passed, as before against the Uberti (*H.* x. 82-84), so more recently against Dante and the Bianchi who were associated with him (*Purg.* vi. 110).

We note the pathos with which, in spite of all that he had suffered, the poet still clings to the city which he loved. Who could love her with so intense a love as his? Comp. *Par.* xxv. 1-9; *Conv.* i. 3. He will not give up the hope that she will yet welcome him back and crown him with honour (vol. i. p. ci.)

Nor lavish them on those of little worth ;
 So that true Prudence and her sisters may
 Dwell with thee still, nor thou disown their sway. 45

Serene and glorious, on the whirling sphere
 Of every creature blest,
 If thou dost this, thou shalt in honour reign,
 And thy high name, which now with shame we hear,
 On thee, Fiorenza, rest. 50
 And soon as true affection thou shalt gain,
 Blest shall the soul be, born in thy domain.
 Thou wilt deserve all praise and majesty,
 And the world's ensign be ;
 But if thy pilot thou refuse to change, 55
 Then greater storms, and death predestinate
 Expect thou, as thy fate ;
 And through thy paths all discords wild shall range.
 Choose thou then now, if peace of brotherhood,
 Or wolf-like ravin make most for thy good. 60

Boldly and proudly now, my Canzon', go,
 Since love thy steps doth guide ;
 Enter my land, for which I mourn and weep,
 And thou wilt find some good men there, though low
 Their light burns, nor spreads wide ; 65
 But they sink down, their virtues in the mire.
 Cry to them, Rise, my trumpet bids aspire ;
 Take arms, and raise her to her place on high,
 For she doth wasted lie.

IV. The words imply the thought of stellar influences, not, as in popular astrology, the result of blind chance or inexorable laws, but as guided by the angelic intelligences, who in their turn were under the control of the Divine Will which answered prayer, and made all things work together for good to those who loved Him. With this richness of blessing "Florence" would be at once *nomen et omen*. We note the parallelism of the closing lines with Henry VII.'s speech to the Italian delegates at Lausanne (vol. i. p. ci.) What the "good ship" needed was a better pilot across the troubled sea of Italian politics, a pilot such as the Emperor or Dante himself might prove. Line 60 finds a parallel in *Par.* xxv. 6, and confirms the interpretation of *H.* i. 49, which sees in the "wolf" a symbol at once of avarice as such, and of Florence, as being, with the Papal Curia, its chief representative.

VI. Even in Sodom there were ten righteous men. Even in Florence there were a few lights shining in the darkness (comp. *H.* vi. 73), such, e.g., as Dino Compagni and Giovanni Villani; perhaps also the friend to whom *Ep.* 20 was addressed (vol. i. p. cxix.) was perhaps in Dante's thoughts. He calls on them to come to the rescue of his beloved fatherland. The names that follow recall passages in the *Commedia*. Crassus (*Purg.* xx. 116), Simon Magus (*H.* xix. 1; *Par.* xxx. 147), Capaneus (*H.* xiv. 63, xxv. 15), Aglauros (*Purg.* xiv. 139), the false Greek Sinon (*H.* xxx. 98), Mahomet (*H.* xxviii. 31). The names of Pharaoh and Jugurtha point to the regions of Egypt and Mauritania as under the rule of Islam.

For Capaneus and Crassus her devour. 70
 Aglauros, Simon Magus, the false Greek,
 And Mahomet, the weak
 Of sight, who wields Jugurtha's, Pharaoh's power :
 Then turn to her, good citizens and true,
 And pray that she a nobler life renew. 75

SONNET XL.

FRIENDLY WARNING.

Io mi credea del tutto esser partito.

I THOUGHT that I had parted evermore,
 Good Messer Cino, from those rhymes of thine,
 For now another course I must assign
 To my good ship, already far from shore :
 But since I hear it rumoured o'er and o'er 5
 That thou art caught by any bait and line,
 To give to this my pen I now incline,
 A little while, my wearied fingers' lore.
 Who falls in love, as is the case with thee,
 Bound and set free by every new delight, 10
 Shows that but lightly Love hath aimed his dart.
 If to so many wills thy heart gives plight,
 I pray, in Heaven's name, it reformed may be,
 That to your sweet words deeds be counterpart.

SONNET XL.

The Sonnet is addressed to Guidoncino dei Sinibaldi, better known as Cino da Pistoia, one of Dante's early friends, the "poet of love," as he himself was the "poet of righteousness" (*V. E.* ii. 2). The parallelism of ll. 3, 4, with *Purg.* i. 1-3, seems to indicate that it was written in the later years of Dante's life. Other and higher work than that of writing sonnets has occupied his thoughts. As Cino returned to Pistoia in 1314, and was in exile when he answered Dante, the Sonnet must have been written before that date. Cino had apparently shown but little interest in his friend's graver work. Dante had heard, on his side, that Cino was no longer the true poet of love, faithful to the Selvaggia, who had been to him, in some measure, what Beatrice had been to Dante, but had transferred his devotion to another. Cynical critics, remembering the "*donna gentile*" of *V. N.* c. 36, the Gentucca of *Purg.* xxiv. 37, the "*Montanina*" of the letter to Moroello Malaspina (vol. i. p. lix.), might ask whether Dante was the man to cast the first stone at his friend's failings. On the other hand, however, it may be argued that a man, conscious that he was exposing himself to a retort, would hardly have written as Dante did, and so far the Sonnet takes its place as part of the evidence for the defence. Cino's answer (*Rim. Ant.* p. 340) is that he is in exile, a wanderer on the face of the earth, nigh unto death. He has not forsaken his first love, but he is banished from her, and finds joy in all beauty that resembles hers. And as he finds that likeness in many fair ladies, that is the explanation of his apparent fickleness.

SONNET XLI.

QUIS LOCUS INGENIO ?

Poich' io non trovo chi meco ragioni.

SINCE I have none who will with me converse
 Of that Lord whom we serve, both you and I,
 Needs must I with the strong desire comply,
 The good thoughts that stir in me to rehearse :
 Nought else doth keep me in this mood perverse 5
 Of silence that I feel so painfully,
 Save that my lot in such vile place doth lie,
 That Good finds none to shelter it ; yea, worse,
 Love finds no home in face of lady fair,
 Nor is there any man who for him sighs, 10
 And were there one, "fool" would they call him there.
 Ah ! Messer Cino, ill our changed times fare :
 To our great loss, and to our poesy's,
 Since goodness such a scanty crop doth bear.

SONNET XLII.

RIVALS OR PARTNERS.

Due donne in cima della mente mia.

Two ladies to the summit of my mind
 Had come to hold discourse concerning love.
 In virtue clothed and kindness, one doth move,
 Prudence and honour follow close behind.

SONNET XLI.

This also is addressed to Cino da Pistoia, and belongs to the period when both friends were in exile. Dante complains that where he is he finds none like-minded with himself. None know what true love is. This was the explanation of the poet's long silence. What the place was which he found so evil we are left to conjecture; probably Verona or Ravenna. The tone reminds us of *Par.* xvii. 58-60. Rossetti, *more suo*, finds a political meaning in the sonnet. Dante was in a Guelph city, and the "men" and the "ladies" of whom he speaks were the two orders of those who were initiated in the Ghibelline mysteries. On this theory "Love" is, of course, the Emperor, or, more probably, the ideal Empire (*Spir. Anti-Pap.* p. 156).

SONNET XLII.

Among many other interpretations, of which I hardly need speak, the "two ladies" have been identified literally with Beatrice and the "*donna gentile*" of *V. N.* c. 36, mystically with the Theology and Philosophy whom they are supposed to represent. So interpreted, the

Beauty the other hath and grace refined, 5
 And a fresh honour gentleness doth prove;
 And I, by grace of my dear Lord above,
 Do homage to their sovereignty combined.
 Beauty and virtue both the soul invite,
 And question, Can a heart, in loyalty 10
 Of perfect love, to ladies twain be plight?
 The fount of gentle utterance makes reply,
 "Yea, Beauty may be loved for her delight,
 And Virtue likewise for her workings high."

SONNET XLIII.

FAIR BUT CRUEL.

Nulla mi parrà mai più crudel cosa.

NOUGHT can to me more pitiless appear
 Than she, to serve whom I my life have lost,
 For her affection is as lake in frost,
 And mine dwells ever in Love's furnace clear.
 Of this fair maid, so proud and so severe, 5
 I joy to see the beauty she doth boast,
 And so with love of my great pain am tost,
 No other pleasure to my eye comes near.

Sonnet seems intended to reconcile the *Vita Nuova* and the *Convito*. I question the interpretation altogether, and find the key to the problem which the Sonnet presents in *Purg.* xxviii. and *Ball.* ii. and iii. The "lady" of the first quatrain is, I admit, Beatrice; but in the other I find Matilda. Here also there is the *leggiadria*, the "gaiety," the "gentleness," the "virtue," of which we read in *Ball.* iii. And with it there is joined the high and noble activity of which Matilda is the admitted symbol (*Purg.* xxviii. 40, n.) So understood, the lines throw light, if I mistake not, both on the outward and inward life of Dante. He had loved both Beatrice and Matilda with a pure and ardent love in his early youth (*V. N.* c. 8). He loved their transfigured memories in his manhood and his age. He loved with an almost equal love the active and contemplative life, which they respectively represented. Like another Jacob, he could love both Leah and Rachel, and, in his case, neither would be jealous of the other, and each, as in *Purg.* xxviii.-xxxiii., would do her part in leading him to Lethe and Eunoë, to the oblivion of all evil, and the revival of all good memories, as the condition of his attaining to completeness.

SONNET XLIII.

Apparently a reproduction in verse of the thought of *Conv.* iii. 11-15. Wisdom, as in the Assisi fresco, has turned her severer aspect towards her worshipper. The "frozen lake" reminds us of *H.* xxiv. 22-24; the "fire of love" of the well-known hymn of St. Francis of Assisi; l. 9 refers to the story of Clytie (*Met.* iv. 270), who loved Apollo, and was turned into a sunflower, so that she might always gaze on him. "*Vertitur ad solem mutataque servat amorem.*" It is noticeable that this and the following sonnet are addressed in the Ambrosian MSS. to a Giovanni Quirino, a poet of Venice. Poems bearing that name are found in the MS. from which this Sonnet is taken in the Ambrosian Library at Milan.

Not she, who ever turns the Sun to see,
 And, changed herself, a love unchanged doth keep, 10
 Had ever, as I have, a woe so deep;
 Therefore, since never can thy full power sweep
 O'er this fair proud one, Love, ere life shall flee,
 For pity's sake, come, sigh awhile with me.

SONNET XLIV.

FAITH AND UNFAITH.

Lo re, che merta i suoi servi a ristoro.

THE king, who doth his servants recompense
 In fullest measure, heaped and running o'er,
 Bids me my rancorous pride indulge no more,
 And to the highest Council look from hence :
 And thinking on the choir of citizens, 5
 Who in the heavenly city evermore
 Praise their Creator, I, a creature, soar,
 Eager to praise yet more His love immense.
 For if the future prize I contemplate,
 To which God calls all born of Christian race, 10
 Nought else can in my wishes find a place.
 But much I mourn for thee, dear friend, whose face
 Turns not to look upon that future state,
 Losing sure good for shows that hope frustrate.

SONNET XLIV.

The "dear friend" to whom the Sonnet is addressed is the Giovanni Quirino just named (*S.* 43, *u.*) The thoughts and language alike point to the time when Dante was finishing the *Paradise*. In the Ambrosian MS. it comes as an answer to one in which the writer congratulates Dante on the work he had accomplished in honour of God and of the Virgin, but speaks mournfully of himself, as being without hope, either for this world or the life to come, in the tone of an epicurean who lives on, though life is no longer for him worth living. Dante, in his reply, speaks in far different tones. He has laid aside the bitterness of past years. He gazes on the heavenly Consistory (*Par.* xxix. 67), on the citizens of the holy city (*Par.* xxxi., xxxii.) He finds strength and comfort in the hope of the great reward. He can but mourn that his friend is not a sharer in that hope.

BALLATA XI.

THE BEATIFIC VISION.

Poichè saziar non posso gli occhi miei.

SINCE still I fail mine eyes to satisfy,
 With looking on my lady's face so fair,
 So fixed my glances there
 Shall be, that bliss shall spring from seeing her.
 E'en as an angel who in essence pure
 Doth still on high endure,
 And seeing God, in fullest bliss hath part:
 Thus mortal, and no more,
 Beholding the full store
 Of beauty in her face who holds my heart,
 I too of blessedness may learn the art.
 Such is her virtue that it spreads and flows,
 Though what it is none knows,
 Save him, whose yearnings honour true confer.

BALLATA XII.

SPRING-TIDE JOY.

Fresca rosa novella.

FRESH rose, just newly born,
 And joy-inspiring Spring,
 As I in gladness sing,

BALLATA XI.

The evidence of authorship is not certain, the poem being found in some MSS. as written by Cino of Pistoia. It is, however, received by Fraticelli, Krafft, and Witte. The thought seems to me sufficiently Dantesque. The bliss of the saints consists, as throughout the *Paradiso*, in the beatific vision of God: so the lover finds his joy in the vision of the beloved one. Here, as elsewhere, we ask who was present to the poet's thoughts, Beatrice in the flesh, or as transfigured into Divine Wisdom or Philosophy, or some earthly *parcoletta*. Probably here, as elsewhere, the first two answers would both be true, melting into each other like dissolving views.

BALLATA XII.

We are once more in a region of conjecture. The poem has been ascribed to Enzo, king of Sardinia, son of Frederick II., and to Guido Cavalcanti; to the latter chiefly on the strength of the fact that the "*primavera*" (= spring) in l. 2 is supposed to allude to the mistress of his affections, who was known by that name (*V. N. c. 24*). In tone and form the

Through meadow and by stream,
 How high I you esteem
 I tell each green plantation.

5

Yes, your high praise shall flow,
 In joy renewed by all,
 The great ones and the small,
 Whatever path they go ;
 And birds shall trill their call
 Each in the tongue they know,
 In eve or morning's glow,
 On the green shrubs and tall :
 And all the world shall sing
 (As is indeed most meet),
 Since cometh spring-tide sweet,
 Your high praise and glory,
 Telling out your story,
 Your angel-like creation.

10

15

20

Angelic beauty shining
 In thee, Lady, sheweth.
 Heaven ! what joy he knoweth
 Who for thee was pining !
 Thy face, where true joy gloweth,
 Since far behind it leaveth
 All that use perceiveth,
 Still in wonder groweth.
 Goddess-like 'mong women,
 As thou art, thou seemest,
 With such beauty gleamest,
 That 'tis past my telling,
 Past Nature's power, excelling
 E'en all imagination.

25

30

poem approximates more closely to the love-poems of Provençal literature than any of the poems recognised without dispute as Dante's. On any assumption, I find it hard to connect it with any definite fact in Dante's life, and am inclined to look on it, assuming that he wrote it, as being, like the three *Sestinas*, one of the metrical experiments by which he sought to perfect his mastery over all forms of versification (vol. i. p. lxxviii.)

¹³ The use of the word *latino* in the original for the song of birds may be noted as specially characteristic of the early Italian and Provençal poets, notably of Dante's favourite, Arnould Daniel (Witte). In *Par.* iii. 63 it is used for "clear speech" generally.

Yes, beyond man's nature,
 Thy most beauteous presence,
 God has made as essence
 Of each fairest creature;
 On me may that grace shine,
 Nor far from me abide
 The will of God benign!
 And if it seem too daring
 That I to love am driven,
 Well may I yet be shriven;
 For love my soul assaileth,
 With whom nor strength availeth
 Nor Reason's moderation.

SONNET XLV.

WHAT IS LOVE?

Molti, volendo dir che fosse Amore.

MANY who fain would tell what Love may be
 Have spoken words enough, yet failed they still
 To say of him what half the truth should fill,
 Or note of his high greatness the degree:
 And one there was who in it heat did see
 Of soul, through which the thoughts of fancy thrill;
 And others said that 'twas desire of will,
 Born of the heart in joyous ecstasy.

SONNET XLV.

Fraticelli places this *Sonnet* among the doubtful poems; Witte accepts it; Kraft leaves it as an open question. The question mooted in it is discussed with some fulness in the *V. N.* (c. 20), where the solution of the problem is that Love is not in itself a substance, but the accident of a substance. Line 5 seems to refer to a Sonnet by Jacopo da Lentino, the Notary of *Purg.* xxiv. 56 (*Rim. Ant.* p. 318)—

*"Amor e un desio, che vien dal core
 Per l'abbondanza del gran piacimento."*

*"Love is desire, which springeth from the heart
 Through great abundance of exceeding joy."*

An apparent allusion to this Sonnet in the *Acerba* of Cecco d'Ascoli suggests the inference that it was addressed to Cino of Pistoia.

But I affirm Love hath no substance true,
 Nor is corporeal thing with shape imprest, 10
 Rather is it a passion, strong to woo,
 Delight in beauty, gift by Nature blest,
 So that the heart nought other doth pursue,
 And this suffices, while in joy we rest.

SONNET XLVI.

SPRING AFTER WINTER.

Ora che'l mondo s' adorna e si veste.

Now that the world hath donned her bright array
 Of leaves and flowers, and smiles clothe every field,
 And cold and cloud to skies of brightness yield,
 And living creatures all are glad and gay :
 And each one seems to own Love's gentle sway, 5
 And small birds, singing from their throats unsealed,
 Leave off the cries where tones of wailing pealed,
 And pour on hills and vales and woods their lay :
 Now that the season, sweet, and glad, and clear,
 Of spring doth come in its own verdure clad, 10
 My hope revives, and I once more am glad,
 As one who life and praise hath ever had
 From that dear Lord, above all others dear,
 Who gives to me, his slave, no grudging cheer.

SONNET XLVI.

The discovery of the *Sonnet* is due to Witte, who disinterred it from the Ambrosian MS. Fraticelli thinks its authorship doubtful. It seems intended to be a complement to *Canz.* xi., representing the revival of the lover's hope under the sweet influences of spring as that did the survival of his passion under the benumbing frosts of winter. The last words of the *Canzone* seem to promise such a complement. In the one, as in the other, it is open to us to find both a literal and an allegorical meaning. The poet's passion may be that for Beatrice, or the *donna gentile*, or Philosophy.

SONNET XLVII.

GOLD TRIED IN THE FIRE.

Per villania di villana persona.

THROUGH baseness uttered by the base in mind,
 Or through the whisper of the vile and rude,
 It is not meet that lady wise and good,
 Around whose brows the wreaths of praise are twined,
 Should grieve, or deem that fair fame twice refined, 5
 Which is throughout with clearest light imbued,
 Can thus be lost; by her 'tis understood
 That truth 'gainst her no cause of fault can find.
 As is the rose among the brambles seen,
 Or in the fiery furnace purest gold, 10
 So thee, where'er thou art, may men behold.
 Let then the fools prate on with tongue o'erbold,
 For well 'tis known, thou greater praise dost glean
 Than if such wretches' speech had fairer been.

SONNET XLVIII.

AD MISERICORDIAM.

Poichè, sguardando, il cor feriste in tanto.

SINCE with thy glance thou so hast pierced my heart
 With sharpest stroke, that it is nigh to bleed,
 For pity's sake some slight respite concede,
 That my sad spirit may not all depart:

SONNET XLVII.

This, like the preceding *Sonnet*, was published by Witte from the Ambrosian MS.; is accepted by him; rejected by Kraft; placed by Fraticelli among the doubtful poems. To me it seems not unworthy of Dante, and may possibly connect itself with the passage in the *Vita Nuova* (c. 5, 9), in which he says that the poems which he addressed ostensibly to one of the ladies of Florence whom he chose as a "screen" for his passion for Beatrice, gave occasion to the gossip of the scandalmongers (*V. N.* c. 12). In substance it is an application of the converse of the "*laudari a laudato*" maxim. It reminds us of the "*lascia dir le genti*" of *Purg.* v. 13, and of

"To be dispraised of some is no small praise."

SONNET XLVIII.

What has been said of *Sonnets* xlv., xlvii., applies to this *Sonnet* also, save that Kraft admits its genuineness. Lines 5-7 present a parallel with *Canz.* vi. 1-3. In the Italian the

Dost thou not see mine eyes with weeping smart, 5
 Still grieving so for sorrows that exceed,
 Which still my footsteps to death's confines lead,
 That I no refuge find in any part?
 Behold and see, O Lady! if I mourn,
 And if my voice hath passed to thinnest tone, 10
 While still to thee love's suppliant sighs are borne,
 And if it please thee, Lady dear, mine own,
 That this my heart with sorrow should be worn,
 Yet still am I thy humblest servant known.

SONNET XLIX.

STRENGTH IN WEAKNESS.

Togliete via le vostre porte omai.

"THROW open wide your gates in all men's sight,
 And she shall enter who doth others raise,
 For she is one in whom dwells lasting praise,
 And full of courage is, and great in might."
 "Ah me! Alas!"—"What means this doleful plight?"— 5
 "I tremble so, that no strength with me stays."
 "Take heart, for I will be to thee always
 A help and life, as thou shalt tell aright."
 "Nay, I feel all my strength as bound in thrall
 Of secret virtue that with her she brings, 10
 And I see Love who threatens fearful things."
 "Turn thee to me, for in me joy upsprings;
 And let the strokes behind thee only fall;
 Nor fear; soon will they vanish, one and all."

verbs in ll. 1 and 9 are in the plural, those in ll. 3 and 5 in the singular, the former being addressed to the lady of the poet's love, the latter to God.

SONNET XLIX.

Found in the Ambrosian and one other MS. as Dante's; accepted by Witte; doubted by Fraticelli. There are apparently three interlocutors in the dialogue. Love bids the poet open the gates of his soul, that the lady whom he loves may enter. He, however, shrinks once and again in the consciousness of his weakness (comp. *V. N. c. 2*), till the beloved one herself interposes, as in l. 12, to reassure him. Here once more letter and allegory probably interpenetrate. The beloved one may be Beatrice or Philosophy.

CANZONE XXI.

IN MEMORIAM.

Poscia ch' i' ho perduta ogni speranza.

SINCE every hope of mine hath from me gone,
 Thy face again, my Lady fair, to see,
 Nought is there, nor can be,
 To comfort me in this my bitterness.
 To look on thee again hope have I none, 8
 For Fate hath stopped the way that leads to thee,
 By which, perchance, for me
 Had been return to thy high nobleness.
 Therefore my heart abides in such distress,
 That I consume myself in sighs and tears, 10
 Waiting the many years
 I bide, and yet my life Death quenches not.
 What shall I do! Love still on me doth press,
 And failing hope on every side appears.
 No vesture safety bears, 15
 Or succour, all brings torment as my lot,
 Save only that I call on Death to slay,
 And every life-pulse loudly calls away.

CANZONE XXI.

¹ The judgments of Dante experts are divided as to the authenticity of this *Canzone*. Witte (*Lyr. Ged.*, p. 159) receives it on the strength of its having been published, as Dante's, in the Venice edition of 1518, and of its appearing in one or two MSS. with his name attached to it. He is followed by Fauriel (*Dante*, i. p. 233) and Blanc. To them the style seems sufficiently on Dante's level, and the facts which the poem implies to fit in with the records of Dante's life. Fraticelli, on the other hand, rejects it (*O. M. I.* pp. 298-305) on the ground that it is wanting in many printed editions of the *Canzoniere*, and in the greater number of the MSS. of Dante's minor poems; that the style is too weak and diffuse to be recognised as his, and that the facts do not fit in with what is known of Dante's later years after the death of Henry VII. Krafft (*Lyr. Ged.* pp. 460-464) and Trivulzio (quoted in *Frat. O. M. I.* p. 304) agree with him in this judgment. The last-named critic is disposed to assign it to Dante's friend, Cino da Pistoia; Fraticelli to a friend of Petrarch's, Senuccio Benuccio, who appears as the author in some MSS. It is difficult to speak positively in such a case, but I incline, on the whole, with Witte, to accept the *Canzone* as authentic, and have therefore included it in my translation. It has, at any rate, the interest of being the expression of a sorrow which, if not Dante's own, was, at least, that of one like-minded with himself, springing from the event which overthrew his hopes for himself and for the city which he loved with a passionate enthusiasm. The notes which follow will naturally deal with the internal evidence on the strength of which the poem has been accepted or rejected by the critics I have named.

² The "Lady fair," is identified by Witte with Florence. Fraticelli asserts that this is not after Dante's manner, but the opening lines of *Canz. xx.* present a sufficient parallel. The whole passage reminds us of the first stanza of *Canz. vii.*, though there, of course, he speaks of the personal Beatrice.

³ The thought implied is that the success of Henry VII.'s enterprise might have opened the way to an honourable return to Florence, which on its failure was closed to him, except on conditions which, as in *Ep. x.*, it was impossible for him to accept. Comp. vol. i. p. cxix.

That hope of mine, which whilome led me far
 From thy fair charms, which charm me more and more, 30
 I now as false deplore,
 Made false by Death, of every good the foe ;
 For Love, through whom thy hands triumphant are,
 Had promised strength and peace on me to pour.
 Through wise and truthful lore 35
 He my soul strengthened, poor and full of woe,
 And led me labours sweet, though hard, to know :
 He made me part from thee for honour's sake,
 Wishful for thee to take,
 My way, to win more fame and high estate. 39
 My lord I followed : should one say me " No "
 When I proclaim him noblest lord on earth,
 That " No " in lies hath birth ;
 For never was there one so good and great,
 Wise, temperate, brave, and largely liberal, 45
 More just than doth to lot of mortals fall.

This lord, by God's own justice fashioned,
 For virtue, of all men that are, elect,
 Used with supreme effect
 His power, far more than any erst had done. 49
 By neither pride nor avarice was he led,
 Nor fortune ill in him revealed defect ;
 For still one might detect
 The strength which, dauntless, bade his foes come on.
 Wherefore by right and good choice was I won 45

¹⁷ We are again reminded of *Canz.* vii. (ll. 16-20).

¹⁹ The poet's hope in Henry of Luxemburg had led him to reject all other means of returning to Florence. The subject-matter of the poem led him to dwell on that hope as the reason of his absence, rather than on the fact that the city had banished him. That hope the Emperor's death had frustrated, yet he could not regret that he had followed one who was so worthy of all honour. Line 22 reminds us of *Ball.* ii. 1, and the estimate of Henry's character of *Par.* xxx. 136, and *Epp.* v. 2, vii. 2. Comp. vol. i. pp. ci.-ciii.

²⁵ Witte quotes a parallel from an unpublished canzone ascribed in some MSS. to Dante—

*"Questo magnificante, ver, giocondo,
 Magnanimo, affabile, gentile." . . .*

²⁸ The words find a striking parallel in *Epp.* v. 1-5. Henry was, in Dante's thoughts, the divinely chosen ruler who realised the ideal of the *De Mon.*

⁴¹⁻⁴² Comp. the picture of the ideal deliverer in *H.* i. 103. Witte quotes another parallel from the canzone thus named—

*"Alla impresa manifesta il vero
 Ancora che gl' i contrarii la ventura.*

In retinue of lord so dear to stay ;
 And if such went astray
 Who strove against his might with all their power,
 I might not with their hosts of falsehood run.
 I went with him, and shunned his foes alway,
 Nor should we pine away,
 Though Death hath turned the sweet cup into sour ;
 For man should still do good because 'tis good,
 Nor can he fail who doeth what he should.

Some are there who but use for wealth and praise
 The goods which they to Nature's bounty owe ;
 Whence little heed, I trow,
 They take how they their life may rightly lead.
 The honour others give no worth displays ;
 But honour which a man in act doth show,
 As righteous uses grow,
 That is his very own, and praised his deed.
 How were such glory then as nought decreed
 When Death a lord so loved and honoured slew ?
 No true soul takes that view,
 Nor healthy thought, nor soul with vision clear.
 O saintly soul, raised to thy heavenly meed,
 Subject and foe alike thy loss might rue,
 Did but this world pursue
 Its course as ruled by men who good revere,—
 Rue his own guilt, who from thee failed and fell,—
 Rue his own life, who loved and followed well.

I wail my life, for thou, my lord, art dead ;
 More than I love myself did I love thee,
 In whom was hope for me,
 Of home-return, where I should be content.
 And now, with all that hope of comfort fled,
 More than all else, my life goes heavily.
 Death, stern and harsh to see,

⁴⁷ Comp. *Ep.* v. 4, in which Dante reproaches the Italian princes for resisting the ordinance of God in rejecting Henry's sovereignty.

^{55.58} Almost a *replica* of *Canz.* xvi. 21-40, on true nobility.

How hast thou ta'en from me the sweet intent, 80
 Once more to see the fairest pleasures blent,
 That e'er the power of Nature brought to birth
 In lady of great worth,
 Whose beauty is so full of holiest grace !
 This thou hast taken from me, and assigned 85
 Such sorrow as men never know on earth ;
 For now, in life-long dearth,
 I have no hope to see the much-loved face ;
 For he is dead, and I am far off still,
 And therefore hopeless sorrow works its will. 90

My song, thou journeyest into Tuscan land,
 To that great joy above all others dear ;
 End then thy journey there,
 Telling in words of woe my sad estate.
 But, ere thou pass from Lunigiana's strand, 95
 To Marquis Franceschino draw thou near,
 And, with thy sweet speech clear,
 Tell him some hope in him with me doth wait ;
 And since my distance from him sore doth grieve,
 Pray him that I his answer may receive. 100

^{80.85} The critics who reject Dante's authorship lay stress on the inconsistency between this language and the bitterness with which he speaks of the Florentines in *Ep.* vi. And generally throughout the *Commedia*; and Trivulzio assumes, on the supposition that the *Canzone* was written by Cino de Pistoia, that the lady who is thus praised was one of flesh and blood, Selvaggia, or another, whom the poet had hoped to see on returning to his native city. I own that I do not see the alleged incompatibility. Dante's burning indignation against the citizens of Florence might well co-exist, as *Par.* xxv. 1-9, shows that it did, with a passionate affection for the city of his birth, with an equally passionate eagerness to end his days there, if that were possible, as it had once seemed possible, consistently with his self-respect.

⁹⁴ The *envoy* of the *Canzone* has furnished arguments for the adverse critics. If it had to pass through the Lunigiana on its way to Tuscany, it must, they urge, have been sent from France or Provence, or at least Liguria or Lombardy, and we have no record of Dante's presence in any of those regions till we find him in 1317 with Can Grande at Verona. It is, I think, a sufficient answer to this objection to say, that the very incompleteness of our knowledge of Dante's wanderings after the death of Henry VII., admits the possibility of a visit to Verona or to Brescia, where Moroello Malaspina had been appointed by Henry as Imperial vicar. Dante, as *Purg.* viii. 121-132 shows, was largely indebted to the friendship and hospitality of the whole family, and the Franceschino who is here named was named with him as procurator in the negotiation of the treaty of Sarzana (1306), between the Malaspina family and the Bishop of Luni. *Comp.* vol. i. p. lxxxv. So far as I know, there was no like connexion between that family and either of the two other poets to whom the *Canzone* has been conjecturally ascribed.

DANTE'S CONFESSION OF FAITH.

I. CREDO.

FULL oft have I of Love writ many rhymes,
 As sweet and fair and pleasant as I might,
 And much have sought to polish them betimes ;
 But now my every wish is altered quite,
 Because I know that I have spent in vain 5
 My labours, and scant wage may claim of right.
 From that false Love I now my hand restrain ;
 The pen that wrote of him aside being laid,
 And, as a Christian, speak of God full plain.

- I. In God the Father I believe, Who made 10
 All things that are, from Whom all good doth flow
 That is through all their varied forms displayed.
- II. Through heaven and earth His grace still worketh so,
 And out of nothing He created all,
 Perfect, serene, and bright with beauty's glow. 15

It is not without a certain measure of hesitation that I have decided on translating and publishing the series of didactic poems that follow. I must own that I do not find in them the traces of the master's hand. The narrative which introduces them is suspiciously defective as to date and place. It comes to us through an anonymous MS. (1011 in the Bibl. Riccardiana of Florence); is not mentioned by Boccaccio, or any of the earlier commentators on the *Commedia*. On the other hand, it is received by Fraticelli, Witte, and Kraft, and included by the two latter in their translations of Dante's Minor Poems. The tradition connected with it has a certain biographical interest. The poems themselves represent fairly enough the current theology and ethics of the Latin Church of the 13th and 14th centuries, and thus serve to throw light on Dante's teaching. And so the scale was turned in favour of translating, and the reader can exercise his own judgment. I begin with epitomising the tradition to which I have referred.

After the *Commedia* was published, it was studied by many theologians, among others by those of the Franciscan Order. They read in *Par.* xi. 121-139 the lamentations of St. Francis over the degeneracy of his Order, and the poet's own words as to that degeneracy. They were irritated, and set to work to see if they could find materials in his book for accusing him of heresy. He was brought before the Inquisitor on that charge. He asked for a short respite to prepare his defence. It was then past vespers (6 P.M.). By 9 A.M. next day he appeared with his Profession of Faith, written during the night, in the same metre as the *Commedia*. As soon as the Inquisitor had read it, with twelve masters in theology as his assessors, who were unable to find heresy in it, he pronounced a sentence of acquittal and dismissed the accusers with a reprimand.

I own that the story reminds me overmuch of Defoe's Introduction to Drelincourt on *Death*, and I see in it something like a pious fraud, the object of which was to gain the sanction of a great name for an edifying manual of faith and devotion. The *Dittamondo* of Fazio degli Uberti shows that the form of the *terza rima* soon attracted many imitators, and I take the writer of these poems to have been one of them. Possibly also—for the motives of the writers of *apocrypha* are often manifold—he may have thought he was doing something to vindicate the fair fame of Dante against the charge of heresy. It will be remembered that the *Dr. Monarchid* had been condemned and burnt as heretical by the Cardinal del Poggetto, with the authority of Pope John XXII., after Dante's death (Bocc. *V. d. p.* 259, ed. 1733).

With regard to the paraphrase of the Seven Penitential Psalms in *terza rima*, which are commonly printed with the Profession of Faith, there seemed to me to be even less reason for entering on the work of a translator. I do not find any adequate evidence, external or internal, of their genuineness. They present no special points of interest in connexion with Dante's acknowledged work, or with the belief of the Mediæval Church, and without such

- iii. Both things that under sight, touch, hearing, fall,
 Were fashioned by His goodness infinite,
 And those which we things intellectual call.
- iv. And I believe the Son did flesh unite,
 Man's flesh and life, in womb of Virgin blest, 20
 Who helps us with her prayers by day and night :
 And that the Godhead's glory thus did rest
 On Christ, in all His sinless holiness,
 As holy Church doth in her praise attest.
- v. Him thus we perfect God and man confess, 25
 The only Son of God, eternally
 Begotten, God of God, whose Name we bless :
- vi. Begotten, not created, God most High,
 Like to the Father, with the Father One,
 And with the Holy Ghost ; mysteriously 30
- vii. Incarnate, Who that He might all atone,
 Upon the holy Cross was crucified,
 Not for His fault, but of free grace alone.
 Then did He pass to that pit deep and wide
 Of darkness that He might the souls set free 35
 Of the old fathers that did there abide,
 With watching hearts, till God and man should be
 United, and throw wide their prison door,
 And by His passion give them liberty.
 Certain it is that who holds this true lore 40
 Complete, and with unswerving fealty,
 Is through that Passion saved for evermore.

points of contact a translation of a translation of yet another translation has but little chance of being more than a weak dilution of the original.

The reader will hardly, I think, be surprised that, with this view of the characters of the poems, I have thought it best to minimise my work as a commentator. I have not thought it necessary to give scriptural proofs of the doctrines asserted in the *Credo*, or to point out how the *pseudo* (I can scarcely say the *deutero*) Dante, by following in the footsteps of the Church's Creeds, avoids the errors of Ebion and Cerinthus, of Arius and Sabellius, of Nestorius and Eutyches. The writer apparently knows nothing of the *Commedia*, and yet the tradition which introduces the Paraphrase makes that the starting-point of the charge of heresy. Would it not have been enough, one asks, to refer to the poet's examination by the three great Apostles in *Paradise* if it had been necessary to vindicate its orthodoxy? And further, the writer thinks of the Dante whom he personates only as the author of the poems of the *Vita Nuova*, and those poems simply amatory. The allegorical significance of the "*donna gentile*" as one with Philosophy, of the idealised Beatrice as one with Theology, is clearly unknown to him even by report. He puts into Dante's lips a confession like that which we find in Chaucer's *Person's Tale*, that also being probably the pious fraud of a personated authorship.

¹⁷ Comp. the inference of *H.* iii. 1-9 as deduced from the received dogmas of the Church. If Hell be part of God's creation, it must owe its origin to Supreme Goodness as well as to Supreme Power.

³⁵ We note the mediæval views of the Descent into Hades as seen in *H.* iv. 52-60.

- And him who doubteth this, or doth deny,
 As heretic we blame, his own worst foe,
 Losing his soul that doth not this descry. 45
- VIII. From the Cross taken, in the grave laid low,
 On the third day, with body and with soul,
 He rose again, as we believe and know.
- IX. And with the self-same flesh, complete and whole,
 He took from her, the Virgin Mother blest, 50
 He soared on high beyond the starry pole ;
- X. And sits, and shares the Eternal Father's rest,
 Till He shall come to judge the quick and dead,
 And recompense them both with interest.
 Wherefore let each man's work of good be sped, 55
 And for good deeds let him hope Paradise,
 Where God's grace shall on us His heirs be shed.
 And he who sunk in sin and vices lies,
 Let him expect in Hell all grief and pain,
 Sharing with demons their dread miseries. 60
 And of these woes no respite may he gain,
 For they unchanging last for evermore,
 And cries of anguish pour their ceaseless strain.
- XI. From such a doom may He whom we adore,
 The Holy Spirit, save poor souls undona, 65
 Third Person, where is neither less nor more.
 For as the Father is, such is the Son,
 And such the Holy Spirit equally,
 One God, and of three Holies, Holy One.
 Such is in truth the Blessed Trinity, 70
 That Son and Father, equally divine,
 Are with the Spirit One mysteriously ;
 From this desire and love, as both combine,
 Proceeding, from the Father and the Son,
 Not made nor yet begotten—this Creed's mine. 75
- XII. He from that Love and Purpose high alone,
 Of Son and Father doth proceed and reign,
 Nor this nor that as single source doth own.
 Who so attempts more subtly to explain

⁵⁵ The Paraphrase of the Creeds, like the Creeds themselves, ignores the doctrine of *Purgatory*, which occupies so prominent a place in the *Commedia*.

What the full Being of our God may be, 80
Wastes all his labour, and his toil is vain.

xiii. Alone let it suffice that firmly we
Believe in that which Holy Church doth teach,
Who thereof giveth us the true decree.

SACRAMENTA.

- i. Baptism, I do believe, adorneth each 85
With grace divine and makes him wholly clean
Of sin, and doth to every virtue reach :
The fruit of water and the word is here,
Nor more than once is it to any given,
Though he from deadly sin return in fear. 90
And failing this, all hope from each is riven
Of passing onward to the life eterne,
Although he own all virtues under Heaven.
Light of that lamp that doth so brightly burn,
From the blest Spirit oft in us doth show, 95
And all our wishes in the right way turn,
For keen desire for Baptism burneth so
In us, that for his right volition still,
No less than deed, the righteous man we know.
- ii. And to cleanse us from our unrighteous will, 100
And from the sins that from God separate,
We Penance have for wholesome chastening still ;
- iii. Nor by our power, nor skill, however great,
Can we return to win God's bounteous grace,
Unless Confession comes to renovate. 105
This first involves contrition to efface
Ills thou hast done, with thine own mouth then speed
To own the sin that works in us apace.
Then Satisfaction we, as next stage, reach,
Which with the acts aforesaid doth unite, 110
Used well, to win the pardon we beseech.

⁸⁰ *Accedit verbum ad elementa et fit sacramentum* was the definition of mediæval theology. From the Creed we pass to an account of the Seven Sacraments of the Latin Church, Baptism, Penance, the Eucharist, Ordination, Confirmation (the Chrism of l. 143), Extreme Unction, Matrimony. The order in which they are named is not that of theological systems. Possibly the necessities of rhyme may have led to the variation.

- iv. But since our evil foe doth still incite
 Our weak will unto wrong, to our great woe,
 And little fears our virtue's vaunted might,
 That we may 'scape the fraud that cruel foe 115
 Still ever plans our weakness to ensnare,
 E'en he from whom all world-wide evils flow,—
 Our Lord and God doth in His love prepare,
 Father and Friend, Christ's Body and His Blood,
 And on the altar shows them to us there, 120
 His own dear Body, which upon the wood
 Of the blest Cross hung, and Its blood there shed
 To liberate us from the foul fiend's brood.
 And if, apart from error, truth be read,
 We see the very Christ, the Virgin's Son 125
 Veiled in the Host beneath the form of bread,
 True God commingled with true Man in One,
 Beneath that outward show of bread and wine,
 That gift by which our Paradise is won.
 So great and holy, wondrous and divine, 130
 Is that mysterious awful sacrament,
 That my best speech the truth may not define.
 This gives us boldness, gives encouragement,
 Against the cunning tempter's subtlest art,
 So that his skill on us is vainly spent; 135
 For there God hears the pleadings of our heart,
 Which flow from fervent faith in love intense,
 And from sincere contrition take their start.
 The power to work this miracle immense,
 To sing the hours, and others to baptise, 140
 These gifts of might priests only may dispense.
- v. vi. And to confirm our Christian mysteries,
 We Chrisma and the holy oil possess,
 Through which our faith gains stronger energies.
- vii. Our flesh, which evermore to sin doth press, 145
 Its pulses stirred by sensual appetite,
 Oft prompts to deeds of foul lasciviousness.
 To check this evil God, in wise foresight,
 Appointed Marriage as a remedy,
 So that this sin might lose its baneful might. 150

And thus from Satan's snare that we may fly,
 The seven blest sacraments a way provide,
 With prayers and alms and fasts continually.

DECALOGUS.

- I. Ten great Commandments God has given as guide,
 The first that we should worship Him alone, 155
 Nor to false gods and idols turn aside.
- II. Nor to His holy Name should wrong be done,
 Or by false swearing, or by deed unblest,
 But ever should we bless the Holy One.
- III. The third that we should from all labour rest 160
 On one day of the week, the Lord's own day,
 As in the Church's law is manifest.
- IV. And 'tis His will that we should duly pay
 To Father and to Mother reverence meek,
 Since we from them derive our mortal clay. 165
- V. VI. No wrong on life or goods of others wreak,
 VII. But chastely live, in stainless purity,
 Nor shame for others nor dishonour seek.
- VIII. For naught of good we find beneath the sky,
 Should we false witness 'gainst our neighbour bear, 170
 Lest false and true in common ruin lie.
 Nor should fierce wrath of passion us ensnare
 To shed another's blood, and so to mar
 That face of God which we, His creatures, share.
- IX. Nor will he from a deadly sin be far 175
 Who shall his neighbour's wife or goods desire,
 For then his base desires love's entrance bar.
- X. The last of all is that our wills aspire
 No more to gain what is another's right,
 For that too parts us from our heavenly Sire. 180
 And that we may be ready, day and night,
 To keep His holy Law continually,
 Vice shun we, for it sweeps us from His sight.

¹⁵⁵ As in the received arrangement of the Latin Church, what we know as the Second Commandment is incorporated with the First. The position given to the Sixth, as coming between the Ninth and Tenth, has, so far as I know, no authority. The division of the Tenth into two separate precepts was needed, after the amalgamation of the First and Second, to keep up the numerical idea of the Decalogue.

SEPTEM PECCATA MORTALIA.

- I. In Pride the root of every sin doth lie ;
Hence man himself doth hold in loftier fame 185
Than others, and deserving lot more high.
- II. Envy is that which makes us blush for shame,
With grief beholding others' happiness,
Like him, whom we the foe of God proclaim.
- III. Wrath still more woe doth on the wrathful press, 190
For its fierce mood lights up Hell's fiery heat ;
Then ill deeds come, and loss of holiness.
- IV. Sloth looks with hate on every action meet,
And to ill-doing ever turns the will,
Is slow to work, and quick to make retreat. 195
- V. Then Avarice comes, through which the whole world still
Vexes its soul, and breaks through every law,
And tempts with gain to every deed of ill.
- VI. Both fool and wise foul Gluttony doth draw, 200
And he who pampers still his appetite,
Shortens his life, to fill his greedy maw.
- VII. And Lust that comes the seventh in order right,
The bonds of friendship breaks and brotherhood,
At variance still with Truth and Reason's light.
Let us against these sins have fortitude, 205
(They need but little ink to register)
So may we pass where loftiest pleasures brood.
I say, to enter in that cloister fair,
Behoves we lift our orisons to God,
Whereof is first our Paternoster prayer. 210

PATERNOSTER.

- I. Our Father, who in Heaven hast Thine abode,
- II. Thy Name be ever hallowed in our praise,
And thanks for all Thy goodness hath bestowed.

¹⁸⁴ The list of the seven deadly sins has at least the interest of presenting a parallel to the *Seven P.'s* of *Purg.* ix. 112. We may compare Chaucer's *Person's Tale* as dealing more fully with the same subject.

²¹¹ Here we have an opportunity of comparing the real with the apocryphal Dante. A comparison of this Paraphrase of the *Paternoster* with that of *Purg.* xi. 1-21 will, I believe, enable us to measure the difference between the two. Here again one thinks that if the apocryphal story had been true, it would have been more effective to quote what had already appeared in the *Commedia*. It is suggestive that we find the same explanation of the *Libera nos a malo*.

- III. Thy kingdom come, e'en as its meaning weighs
 IV. This prayer of ours, and may Thy Will prevail 215
 V. On earth, as it in Heaven is done always.
 VI. Give, Father, of our bread the daily tale,
 And may our sins be of Thy grace forgiven,
 Nor aught we do of Thy good pleasure fail.
 VII. And as we too forgive, do Thou from Heaven 220
 Grant, for Thy part, forgiveness full and free,
 To save us from the foes with whom we've striven.
 VIII. Our God and Father, Fount of Charity,
 Protect and save us from the subtle snare
 Of Satan and his darts that deadly be ; 225
 So that to Thee we may uplift our prayer
 That we Thy grace may merit, and may come
 Thy kingdom by devotion full to share.
 IX. We pray Thee, Lord, whose glory lights our gloom,
 Guard us from troubles : Lo ! to Thee our heart 230
 With lowly glance looks upward to its Home.
 The blessed Virgin-mother too has part,
 And rightly, in our praises ; well may prove
 Fit close for this, the service of our art.
 We pray her that to grace of God's great love 235
 She lead us, by the might of her blest prayer,
 And from the snares of Hell our souls remove.
 And all who, through their sins in darkness fare
 May she relume, and loose with gracious mien,
 Unbinding from the toils of Hell's despair. 240

AVE MARIA.

Ave Maria, Mother, Maid, and Queen
 Most Gracious, God doth ever with thee stay ;
 Above all women high in heaven serene !
 Blest also be thy Son, to whom I pray,
 Our Jesus Christ, to guard us from all ill, 245
 And lead us with Him to eternal day.
 Blest Virgin, may it ever be thy will
 To let thy prayer to God for us arise,
 That He may here be our Protector still,
 And bring us at the last to Paradise. 250

ECLOGUES.

I.

JOANNES DE VIRGILIO TO DANTE ALIGHIERI.

AH, gentle voice, to all the Muses dear,
 Who with new rhymes dost soothe the troubled world,
 Still striving, with the branch of life's true tree,
 To cleanse it from the taint that bringeth death,
 By laying bare to view the threefold coasts, 5
 Assigned to souls, as merits may demand :
 Hell for the lost ; for those that seek the stars
 Lethe ; and realms above the sun for saints ;

I.

JOANNES DE VIRGILIO TO DANTE ALIGHIERI.

There is to me something singularly touching in the poetical correspondence which now meets us. It belongs to the last years of Dante's life. The *Inferno* and *Purgatorio* were already finished when it began, and in some sense published. Before it closed the *Paradiso* also was completed, and *Ecl.* iv. contains, therefore, the last words that are extant from the poet's hand. It did not reach the friend to whom it was addressed till that hand was cold in death. After the manner of the style which they had chosen, the scholar records in his epitaph to the memory of the master that death had interrupted him in this return to the lighter and more graceful forms of Latin scholarship.

*"Pascua Pieris demum resonabat avenis :
 Atropos hanc ! lectum livida rupit opus."*

And the poems throw light on the occupations of the later years of Dante's life. The great work to which heaven and earth had lent their hands is finished, and there is no other work to take its place. What more natural than that the worn and weary spirit—worn and weary, and yet calmer and brighter than when he began the *Commedia*—should fall back upon the forms of composition in which he had gained his first laurels, and attained his first consciousness of the excellence of the "*bello stile*" (*H.* i. 87) which had won men's praise. That return to the classical studies of their boyhood has been familiar enough to us in the lives of English statesmen and men of letters. Fox and Lord Wellesley, and Lord Derby and Mr. Gladstone and Lord Stratford de Redcliffe, may serve by way of sample for a more complete induction.

One wishes that we had more information as to the young scholar who was thus honoured by the poet's friendship. The epithet *Magister*, applied to him by Boccaccio and an anonymous commentator of the 14th century (*Frat. O. M.* i. 407), implies that he was recognised as, in some sense, a teacher or professor. The poems themselves show that he wrote from Bologna. It may perhaps be reasonably inferred from the fact that the title *de Virgilio* took the place of a patronymic that he did not belong to the class that piqued itself upon a descent from the older noble families of Italy. That name, however, obviously tells us more than this. It implies that he too had found in Virgil, as Dante, his master and his guide. As the Church historian of Cæsarea chose to call himself Eusebius Pamphili, that he might thus acknowledge his obligations to his early friend and instructor ; as Peter Damian took his second name from the brother whom he loved (*Par.* xxi. 106, *sc.*), so Giovanni identified himself by the new name, which thus indicated the poet whom he delighted to honour ; and this, we may well believe, was the starting-point of Dante's regard for him. He addresses his friend as *senex*, and we may infer therefore that he was considerably the younger of the two. We can well understand, remembering how a difference of feeling as to the transcending merits of Virgil's genius had divided Dante from the *primo amico* of his own youth, Guido de' Cavalcanti (*H.* x. 52, *sc.*), the joy with which he would welcome the affection of the young scholar, who, in this matter, was altogether like-minded with himself. Of the other facts recorded of the younger of the two, we may note that he is said to have taught Virgil, Statius, Lucan, Ovid, the four poets of *H.* iv., in a state-supported school at Bologna up to 1321, and to have removed afterwards to Cesena, where he probably died, and that he carried on a literary correspondence, of the same type as that on which we now enter, with the poet Albertino Mussato of Padua. Altogether I see in him one of the most noteworthy representatives of the earlier Italian renaissance. *Ecl.* i. 13 fixes the opening of the correspondence

Why wilt thou still such lofty topics treat
 For the rude herd, while we, with study pale, 10
 Read nothing from thee, poet though thou art ?
 Sooner the wary dolphin with his lyre
 Shall Davus guide, or solve the riddling Sphinx
 Her knotty problems, than the headlong herd
 Illiterate figure Tartarean depths, 15
 And secrets of the Heaven, by Plato's self
 Scarce fathomed ; yet these things the town buffoon,
 Who would drive Horace from the world, croaks out,
 By reason undigested. Thou wilt say,
 "Not to these speak I, but to expert souls, 20
 Though in the people's language." Well, the world
 Of scholars scorns that language, were it one
 Unvarying, not in thousand dialects.

at a date subsequent to 1318. Comp. vol. i. p. cxxiii. It is noticeable too, as Giovanni himself boasts in a poem to Mussato after Dante's death, that this was, as far as he knew (the Eclogues of Calpurnius were not discovered till the 15th century), the first revival of the Virgilian type.

*"Fistula non posthac nostris inflata poetis,
 Donec ea mecum certaret Tityrus olim.
 Lydius, Adriaco qui nunc in litore dormit
 Quâ pineta sacras prætexunt saltibus umbras."*

"That reed our later bards have left untouched
 Till Tityrus, in days now past, with me
 Competed,—Lydian Tityrus, who now
 Sleeps on the Adrian shore, where pine-woods spread
 Their sacred shadows on the grassy mead."

ECLOGUE I.

¹ It will be noted that *Ecl. i.* is simply an epistle in Latin verse. The bucolic form, with its Tityrus and Mopsus, is, characteristically enough, introduced by Dante in *Ecl. ii.* The opening lines show that the writer knew at least the scope and plan of the *Commedia*, as i. 25 indicates a special acquaintance with the Statius episode in *Purg.* xxi. 86–136. Joannes had probably been allowed to see the MS. of the first two cantiques. "Lethe" implies a knowledge of *Purg.* xxx. 143. The "bough" has been identified with the "laurel" of the poet, or the "wood" of *Exod.* xv. 25. More probably the writer alludes to the "golden branch" which served Æneas as a passport through the unseen world (*Æn.* vi. 143).

² The scholar remonstrates with the master on the form which he had chosen. Why treat of such grave themes in the vulgar tongue and for the common people? We may infer that Dante's apology for his beloved *volgare* in *V. E.* i. 16, *Conv.* i. 6–13, had not come under his young friend's eyes. Davus (as in the "*Davus sum, non Œdipus*" of Terence, *Andr.* i. 2) is the typical man of no culture. Sooner might we think of him as equally able with Œdipus to solve the riddle of the Sphinx as to imagine him entering into the mysteries, beyond Plato's ken, of Purgatory and Paradise. Surely those who had grown pale with study had a claim on the poet they honoured.

¹⁷ Was the buffoon reciter to bawl out in the street the things he could not understand? If the words are taken as describing what had actually happened, they imply something like a general publication of the *Commedia*. Probably, however, they are only an anticipation of what may be, and the scholar appeals to the irritable sensitiveness which his friend had shown when, as in the stories told by (*Nov.* 114, 115) Sacchetti and others, he heard his earlier Italian poems mangled by blacksmiths and donkey-drivers as they pursued their calling.

¹⁹ Dante might answer that he wrote not for the common herd, but for the men of culture. "Well" is the reply, "men of culture won't have the 'vulgar tongue' at any price." That would be true even if there was a recognised Italian language; how much more when there were only a thousand dialects?

And none of those with whom thou rank'st as sixth,
 Nor he thou followest on thy heavenward path, 25
 Wrote in the speech that through the market rings.
 Wherefore, out-spoken critic of our bards,
 If thou wilt give free course I'll speak my mind.
 Be not too wasteful, throwing pearls to swine,
 Nor clothe the sisterhood of Castaly 30
 In unmeet raiment, but, I pray thee, choose
 The speech that will most widely give thee fame
 For thy prophetic song, the common lot
 Of this and of that nation. Even now
 Full many a theme there is that waits thy speech. 35
 Tell with what flight the bearer of Jove's bolts
 Made for the stars: tell what the flowerets fair
 And what the lilies that the plowman crushed:
 Tell of the Phrygian does that wounded lie,
 Torn by the teeth of fierce Molossian hounds; 40
 Tell of Ligurian mountains, and the fleets
 Of fair Parthenope, in verse of thine,
 So that thy fame may spread to Gades old,
 Alcides' city, and that Ister's stream
 May hear and wonder, as will Pharos too, 45
 And where Elissa once was owned as queen.
 If fame delight thee, it will scarce content
 To be cooped up within a narrower sphere,
 And find thy glory in the vile herd's praise.
 Lo I, the priest—if thou that claim concede— 50

²⁴ Why not follow the five great Latin poets with whom Dante had joined himself in *H. iv.* 102, or Statius, whom he had met in *Purg.* xxi. 83-99? We are tempted to ask whether Joannes thought that they had written in a language "not understood of the people" among whom they lived?

²⁷ The words might refer to the criticisms in the *V. E.*, but, as we have seen reason to believe that the writer had not read that book, we may more probably connect them with passages like *Purg.* xxiv. 55-63, xxvi. 97-126, which he had just been reading.

²⁸ Yes, a Latin poem would give Dante a wider fame, not limited to his own nation; and as for subjects, the scholar can suggest a round half-dozen for his master's choice. There was the Italian campaign of Henry VII. (vol. i. pp. ci.-ciii.), the war of Uguccione della Faggiuola (*Ball.* xv.; vol. i. p. cxvi.) against the "lilies" of the city of flowers, or that of Can Grande, the Molossian mastiff, against the Paduans (1312), who, as claiming descent from Antenor, are described as Phrygians, or that of Robert II. of Naples against Piedmont and Genoa. A poem on such subjects as these might win a widespread fame, for which the *Commedia* could never hope, from east and west, and north and south. "Pharos," of course, points to Alexandria, and "Elissa" is Dido. What a field was open to ambition there! What an example, we add, of the irony of history we might have had, had the master followed the scholar's counsels!

²⁹ The ambition of the scholar led him to picture to himself his own share in the triumph. Would it not be a proud moment for Dante as well as for himself to crown him in the school of Bologna with the poet's wreath? What he had said as to subjects for an epic was not enough. There was yet a wider choice. Mountains and seas were alike full of wars and

Of those fair nymphs who haunt Aonian hills,
 And Maro's servant, bearing Virgil's name,
 Will gladly be the first to lead thee forth,
 'Mid crowds of loud-applauding worshippers,
 Thy temples crowned with wreaths of fragrant bays, 55
 E'en as the herald, mounted on his horse,
 Exults, proclaiming loud with echoing voice
 His leader's trophies to the joyful crowd.
 E'en now the alarm of war affrights mine ears :
 What threats are those of father Apennine ? 60
 Why are Tyrrhenian waves by Nereus lashed ?
 Why rages Mars on this side or on that ?
 Take thou thy lyre, and calm that tumult wild.
 Unless thou sing of this, while other bards
 Hang on thee, that alone thou sing to all, 65
 They will remain untold. Yet even now,
 If thou, who dwell'st hard by Eridanus,
 Give me the hope that thou wilt visit me,
 And count me worthy of some kindly lines,
 And if it irk thee not to read my verse, 70
 Weak though it be—e'en such as goose o'er-bold
 Might cackle to the swan of sweetest song—
 Or answer, Master mine, or grant my prayer.

 II.

DANTE ALIGHIERI TO JOANNES DE VIRGILIO.

THOSE letters black on patient paper traced
 We read, those warblings from Pierian breast,
 Flowing so softly, flowing too for us.

rumours of war, only waiting for the touch of the poet's hand, and without that, destined to be left unsung. He hints even that his friend's song might restrain the fierce passions of the combatants.

⁶⁷ As sojourning in Ravenna, communicating with one of the mouths of the Po by a canal, Dante was described as a dweller by that river. He had given his friend the hope that he would some day or other visit him at Bologna, and show that he counted him worthy of his friendship. To that visit Joannes looked forward. Meanwhile the swan of Italian poetry will perhaps condescend to listen even to the cackling of the goose. One feels, however, as one reads that last line, that the young poet looked on himself as at least an ugly duckling growing towards swanhood.

ECLOGUE II.

We can imagine the half-amused feeling with which the master read the scholar's letter. In adopting as the form of his answer the pattern presented by the Virgilian Eclogues, there is perhaps a playful reminder that he too knows something of Virgil; that he is as skilled in

And so it chanced we told our tale of goats
 Fresh from their pastures, I beneath the oak,
 And Melibœus with me. He indeed—
 For much he sought with me to read that song—
 "O Tityrus" began, "I pray thee tell
 What Mopsus means?" And I, O Mopsus, smiled.
 And then he urged his question more and more.
 Conquered at last by my great love for him,
 My laughter scarce repressed, I answered him.
 "Why ravest thou, O foolish one?" said I,
 "The goats thou tendest, they demand thy care,
 E'en though thy meagre fare may vex thee too.
 Unknown to thee the pastures where the shade
 Of Mænalus o'erhangs, and hides the sun
 With sloping summit—pastures decked in tints
 Of thousand hues of grasses and of flowers.
 A lowly stream, by willow boughs o'erhung,
 Surrounds them, from its surface scattering dew
 O'er all its banks, and hollows out a way,
 Where waters wander at their own sweet will,
 From the high summit flowing. Mopsus there,
 While o'er the pliant grass his oxen rove,
 Contemplates, at his ease, of men and gods
 The labours. Then, through pipes that swell with wind,
 He to his inner joys gives utterance,
 So that his sweet songs draw his herds to him,
 And lions calmed rush from the mountain's height
 Down to the plain, and waters stay their course,
 And mountain height and forest nod their heads."

that "*bello stilo*" as the young poet who assumed the cognomen of "*de Virgilio*." Yes, he will be Tityrus, the "*fortunatus senex*" of *Ecl.* i. 47. And the Melibœus who is with him is (so the early commentators tell us) the Dino Perini of Florence, the poet's friend, whose name has met us in the story of the first seven cantos of the *Inferno* (vol. i. p. lxxxvi.) In designating Joannes as Mopsus there is possibly a sportive reference to *Ecl.* v. 2—

*"Boni quoniam convenimus ambo,
 Tu calamos inflare leves, ego dicere versus."*

It was well that the younger bard should be reminded of the nature and limits of his gift.

⁴ The two friends are together when the letter comes. Perini waits to know its contents. Dante smiles instead of answering (comp. *V. N.* c. 4). The goatherd had better look after his goats (*Purg.* xxvii. 86), *i.e.* his scholars.

¹⁷ Mænalus, the mountain of Arcadia, stands for the bucolic poetry in which Dante claims to be an expert. It "conceals the sun," because it interposes the veil of allegory between the reader and its true meaning. The description of the stream which flows from the mountain reminds us of Dante's account of his own special excellence as a poet in *Purg.* xxiv. 52-54. The description of Mopsus as a second Orpheus is obviously not without a touch of playful irony.

"O Tityrus," spake he, "if Mopsus sings
 In unknown pastures, yet his unknown songs
 I yet may teach to these my wandering goats 35
 With thee to guide me." What then could I do,
 When he thus urged me, panting eagerly?
 "O Melibœus, to Aonian hills
 Mopsus has given himself, year following year,
 While others toil o'er law and equity, 40
 And in the holy mountain's shade grows pale,
 Washed in the stream that quickens poets' life,
 And full, till breast, throat, palate overflow
 With milk of song; my Mopsus summons me
 To take the leaves that grow on Peneus' shore, 45
 Where Daphne was transformed."

"What wilt thou do?"

Said Melibœus. "Wilt thou ever keep
 Thy brows undecked with laurels, through the fields
 As shepherd known?" "Nay, name and fame of seer, 50
 Oft vanish, Melibœus, into air,
 And scarcely has the Muse our Mopsus brought
 To full completeness, spite of sleepless nights."
 Then spake I, indignation finding voice:
 "What echoes will from hills and fields resound, 55
 If with a laurelled brow I tune my lyre
 To pæan hymns? And yet I own I fear
 The thickets wild, and fields that know not God.
 Were it not better done to deck my locks
 With triumph-wreath, and should I e'er return 60
 Where my own Arno flows, to hide them there,
 Now grey, once golden, 'neath the laurel crown?"

³⁵ Melibœus presses his inquiries. It might be well for his scholars to learn the Virgilian verses which Mopsus had just sent to his master. Tityrus can no longer refuse to answer his questions. "Mopsus is a votary of the Muses, dwelling on the Aonian Mount. He summons me to put in my claim to the laureate wreath." The daughter of Peneus is Daphne, loved by Apollo, and transformed into a laurel (*Met.* i. 452-567).

⁴⁷ "Well," is Melibœus Perini's natural question, "Will you act on that suggestion, write a poem, submit it to the judgment of scholars, and claim the laurel?"

⁶⁰ The poet's answer is twofold. He has fallen on evil days, and scarcely even Mopsus, with all his restless study, has gained the reputation of a poet. But great as might be the honour of the laureate wreath, Bologna does not attract him. The Guelph anti-imperial city is no place for him. Rather will he wait till he can return to Florence (*Par.* xxv. 1-12; vol. i. p. lxix.), and claim it there. The "*flavescere*" of the original in l. 62 points to a less swarthy complexion than that which we commonly associate with Dante's name, and so far agrees with the Bargello portrait.

And he, "Who doubts this? Yet, O Tityrus,
 Bethink thee, therefore, how the time flies fast,
 The she-goats are grown old whom once we paired, 65
 That they might bring forth young."

Then I replied,

"When in my song the sea-girt mountain high,
 And those who dwell within the starry spheres,
 Shall be revealed, as now the realms of Hell, 70
 Then 'twill be well with ivy and with bay
 To crown my brows. Will Mopsus grant me this?"

"Mopsus!" he answered, "See'st thou not that he
 Condemns the speech of that thy Comedy,
 As by the lips of women trite and worn, 75
 Rejected by the nymphs of Castaly?"

"So is it," I replied, and then again
 I read thy verses, Mopsus. With a shrug
 He answered, "What then lies within our reach
 Our Mopsus to convert?" And then I said 80
 "I have an ewe, thou know'st her goodliest far
 Of all the flock, in milk abounding so
 That scarce she bears the weight of udders full,—
 'Neath the vast rock just now she chews the cud,—
 Joined to no flock, accustomed to no fold. 85
 Of her free will, unforced, she never fails
 To seek the milk-pail. Her 'tis in my mind
 To milk with ready hands, and ten jugs full
 Will I to Mopsus send." "Do thou meanwhile
 Watch all the frolics of the gamesome goats, 90
 And learn to fix thy teeth in hardest crusts."
 So sang we then beneath our oak boughs, I
 And Melibœus, while our poor abode
 Saw homely meal preparing on the hearth.

⁶⁵ Melibœus reminds his friend that time passes quickly. The young scholars who would welcome his poem are growing up into manhood.

⁶⁷ "Yes," is the poet's answer; "when I have finished my *Purgatory* and my *Paradise*, then, and resting my claims on them, the poet's wreath will be welcome." Mopsus, perhaps, will allow that. This leads to the question what Mopsus had said, and then to this Dante replies that he, Mopsus, condemns that form of poetry in the vulgar tongue which even women can read and recite, and he reads the *Eclogue* which he had received. Melibœus naturally asks how they shall convert Mopsus to a better mind. And the answer is not far to seek. In bucolic language Dante has an ewe-goat from whose udders the milk flows freely and without constraint. He will send him ten pails of that milk, that he may taste and judge. In other words, he will let him see ten Cantos of the *Paradiso*.

⁸⁹⁻⁹¹ I assign these words to Melibœus. He warns Dante to beware of the men whom he has held up to reproof in the *Commedia*, and has thus made his enemies, and of the hardships (*Par.* xvii. 116-120) which result from that enmity.

III.

JOANNES DE VIRGILIO TO DANTE ALIGHIERI.

BENEATH the hills well watered, where we see
 Savena meet with Reno, sportive nymph,
 Her snowy locks entwined with wreaths of green,
 I found a shelter in a rock-hewn cave.
 My heifers cropped the herbage on the banks, 5
 Lambs browsed on tender grass, the goats on shrubs.
 What should I do? for I alone was there
 As dweller in the woods, the rest being gone
 Full speed into the city, business-pressed;
 No Nysa or Alexis answered me, 10
 Before, such constant comrades. With my hook
 I carved me pipes of water-reeds;—best cure
 Is that for hours that linger—when the shade
 Of Adrian shore, there where the crowded pines
 In their long rows and stretching up to heaven, 15
 O'erhang the fields as guardian deities,
 Fields sweet with myrtles and with thousand flowers,
 And where the watery Ram leaves no sands dry,
 But craves for showers his soft fleece to bedew—
 The whistling wind of Eurus blowing soft, 20
 Brought to my ears the song of Tityrus,
 Borne on the vocal fragrance, o'er the heights
 Of Mœnalus, balm-breathing on the ear,
 And in the mouth milk-dropping, like to which
 For many a day the guardians of the flock 25
 Remember not, though all Arcadians be.
 Arcadian nymphs rejoice to hear the song,
 Shepherds, and sheep, and shaggy goats, and kine;

ECLOGUE III.

¹ The Sarpina (Savena) and Reno are the two rivers of Bologna. The former divides into two branches, known as the Old and the New, to which the epithets "green" and "snowy" respectively refer. Adopting the bucolic style of his master, Joannes describes himself as in solitude while his scholars had left him for their business in the city, and he was tuning his flageolet, *i.e.*, taking up his pen to write, when he heard the pipe of Tityrus resounding on the Adrian shore. In other words, he has received Dante's *Eclogue* and the ten Cantos which accompanied it. The former he admires. It is long since the poets of Italy had heard anything like it. It charms not only Virgilian scholars like himself, but even men of rougher moods and lower culture. It stirs him up to imitation. He too will play on the Virgilian reed, and for a time lay aside his graver tasks. Benacus (= Lago di Garda), from which the Mincio flows to Mantua, represents the birthplace of Virgil.

E'en the wild asses run with pricked-up ears,
 And fauns come dancing from Lyceian heights. 30
 And to myself I said, "If Tityrus
 Thus charm the sheep, the cattle, and the goats
 Whilst thou, a dweller in the town, didst sing
 The song of cities, how long is it since
 The reed, Benacus-grown, has touched thy lips 35
 In shepherd's song? Nay, let him hear that thou,
 Thou too a shepherd, singest in the woods."
 Nor did I linger then, but laid aside
 The greater reeds, and seized the slender ones,
 To breathe a new strain with my labouring lips. 40
 And so, divine old man, thou wilt be found
 A second Tityrus; nay, the very man,—
 If we give credit to the Samian. So
 Let Mopsus speak as Melibœus spoke.
 Ah me! that thou shouldst dwell in squalid hut, 45
 With dust o'erlaid, and shouldst in righteous wrath,
 Mourn for the fields of Arno, fields from thee
 Stolen, and from thy flocks. Ah, deed of shame
 For that ungrateful city! Yet I pray
 Wet not thy Mopsus' cheeks with flowing tears, 50
 Nor in thy wrath torment thyself and him,
 Whose love clings round thee full as close—I say,
 As close, O good old man, as doth the vine,
 That with a hundred tendrils clasps the elm.
 Oh, that once more thou mightest see thy locks, 55
 Locks grey and sacred, gain a second youth,

31 Characteristically the scholar thinks more of the Eclogue than of the *Paradise*. If the "divine old man" would but write always like this, he would be a second Virgil—Virgil himself reappearing on earth, as in the Pythagorean doctrine of transmigration. His friends Mopsus and Melibœus may now follow—the latter, indeed, had already followed—his example.

35 Tityrus, in the bitterness of his life as an exile, might rightly pour out the vials of his wrath on Florence, but he might spare the scholar who loved him and clung round him as the vine clings round the elm.

44 Ah! if he could but return to Florence and revisit his home once again! Is Phyllis, we ask, the Gemma, of whom we hear so little? Did Joannes know that it was *the* grief of Dante's life to have been parted from her? (*Par.* xvii. 55). But meanwhile will he not visit him at Bologna and join him in his studies? Each poet might write according to his age. He describes his home and the hospitality which he offers in glowing colours, but, of course, after the bacolic fashion. The "wild thyme" perhaps stands for philosophic studies; "poppy" for the soothing influences of the medical studies in which Dante found refreshment. We note, at all events, a reference to the sleeplessness from which Dante apparently suffered. The mushroom and pepper, the garlic, the honey and the apples, stand, we may suppose, for different forms of literature, the words of the wise, the satires, the sonnets, the *canzoni* which made up a poet's feast.

Grown golden, and be trimmed by Phyllis' self.
 How wilt thou then behold with wondering look
 Thy vine-clad cottage! Yet, lest long delay
 Bring weariness, thou may'st awhile rejoice 60
 To see my joy, the caves where I find rest;
 Refresh thyself with me. We both will sing;
 I, with my slender reed, thou playing still
 The part of master, with more majesty,
 So that age find his fitting place for each. 65
 The place itself invites thee, flowing stream
 Purls through the cavern which the rocks protect,
 And where the shrubs waft breezes; and around
 Wild marjoram pours its fragrance, and for sleep
 The poppy grows, and brings—so men report— 70
 A sweet forgetfulness; a couch for thee
 Of wilding thyme shall our Alexis strew
 Whom Corydon bids me call, and willingly
 Will Nysa gird herself to wash thy feet,
 And get thy supper ready. Thestylis 75
 Shall season mushrooms with the pungent dust
 Of pepper, and subdue the garlic strong,
 If Melibœus chance to gather that,
 Too rashly, in his garden. Hum of bees
 Shall bid thee to eat honey. Apples sweet 80
 Shall be for thee to gather and to taste,
 Rosy as Nysa's cheeks are; much beside
 Thou wilt not touch as being all too fair;
 And o'er the cave the ivy creeps and creeps,
 With wreaths prepared for thee. And, in a word, 85
 No pleasure shall be lacking. Come thou then,

⁶⁵ And all honour will be paid to the visitor. Ivy is there for the poet's wreath. The students of Bologna (Parrhasius, as an Arcadian mountain, is the symbol of culture), and they will rejoice in the new poems (*gw.* the Eclogue?) and the old (*gw.* the *Commedia*?). They will bring their tributes of honour (*gw.* panegyric verses?), such as Melibœus-Perini had delighted in when he received them at Bologna.

⁷⁷ And why should Tityrus fear Bologna? Men of high and low estate are ready to give pledges of their faithfulness. He might, at least, visit the scholar to whom he was so dear. Chiron and Apollo had not disdained the shepherd's life in a strange land, and why should he?

⁸⁰ Then a new thought occurs to him, and Mopsus makes answer to himself. Iolas (Virg. *Ecl.* iv. 57, makes him the rich lover of Alexis), *i.e.*, Guido da Polenta of Ravenna, Dante's host and patron, will not allow him to leave, and Dante himself will prefer Ravenna to Bologna. Why should the scholar thus seek after the unattainable? Well, he can only plead that he follows the law of his nature. He admires, and therefore he must love.

And with thee come all those who wish to see
 Thy presence with us, young and old alike,
 From hills Parrhasian, all who would admire
 In joy thy newer songs, and learn the old. 90
 These will to thee their offerings bring, or goats,
 Fresh from the woods, or spotted hides of lynx,
 As Melibœus once was wont to do.
 Come then, and fear not, Tityrus, our fields :
 The lofty pines with waving heads, give pledge 95
 Of safety for thee ; even so the shrubs,
 And acorn-bearing oaks. No wiles are here,
 No plots, as thou dost deem, of frauds and wrong,
 Wilt thou not trust thyself to me who love thee ?
 Perchance thou scornest this my poor abode : 100
 And yet the gods have not disdained to dwell
 In hollow caverns, witness Chiron old,
 Achilles' foster-father, and Apollo,
 Who lived a shepherd with the sons of men.
 " Art thou mad, Mopsus ? Nay, Iolas, he, 105
 The man of polished culture, will refuse,
 Seeing that thy gifts are but a peasant's store,
 Nor is thy cave as safe as are the tents
 Where Tityrus seeks repose. But what desire,
 So eager, leads thee, what new impulse stirs 110
 Thy feet ? " The maid still gazes on the youth,
 The youth on bird, the bird upon the woods,
 Mopsus on thee, O Tityrus, and that gaze
 Engenders love. Reject me then, and I
 Will quench my thirst with Muso, Phrygian-born. 115
 Truly thou know'st this not ; thou drinkest still
 Of thine own country's waters.
 Why then, why
 Hear I my heifers lowing ? Why flow streams
 Fourfold of milk between the dropping thighs ? 120
 I have it : I will haste to fill the pails
 With fresh warm milk wherein the hardest crusts

⁸⁷ In the absence of Tityrus, Mopsus will console himself with Muso, *sc.* with Musatto, a Latin poet of Padua of some eminence. Dante, who "drank of the waters of the Arno," *i.e.*, wrote Italian poetry, and cared little for the Latin verses of his contemporaries, was perhaps ignorant of his fame. Lastly, he ends by sending ten poems of his own in return for those which he had received.

Shall pass to softness. Come then to the pail,
 We'll send as many jugs to Tityrus
 As he has promised us. And yet, perchance, 120
 'Tis a bold thing to offer milk to one
 Himself a shepherd.

Even while I speak
 My friends draw near, and on the mountain height
 The setting sun sinks down behind the ridge.

IV.

DANTE ALIGHIERI TO JOANNES DE VIRGILIO.

Eôus, with the Colchian fleece bedecked,
 And all the other wingèd steeds were bearing,
 With headlong course, the Titan wondrous fair.
 His orbit, where it just begins to slope
 From its mid-height, held each wheel of the car 5
 In even balance, and the glittering rays,
 By shadows oft o'ercome, now, in their turn,
 O'ercame the shadows, and the fields grew hot.
 And therefore, in their pity for their flocks,
 Alpheisibœus, yea, and Tityrus, 10
 Fled to the woods, the woods wherein the ash,
 Together with the plane and linden, grows,
 And while the sheep that wander in the fields,
 Goats mingled with them, lie upon the grass,
 And sniff the breeze, lo! Tityrus reclined, 15
 Now full of years, beneath a maple's shade,
 By the soft, slumbrous fragrance sleep-oppressed,

ECLOGUE IV.

¹ The opening lines remind us of *Purg.* ix. 1-9, both being based upon *Met.* ii. 1-30. Eous (=the Dawn) was the name of one of the horses of the sun (*Met.* ii. 153). The epithet "Colchian" points, with its allusion to the golden fleece, to the spring-tide when the sun was in *Aries* (*H.* i. 38). It was noon and the sun was hot.

⁷ The new interlocutor Alpheisibœus, is identified by commentators with Fiducio de' Milotti of Certaldo (Boccaccio's birthplace), a physician of high repute, then staying at Ravenna.

¹⁶ The subjects of which Alpheisibœus spoke were naturally enough partly physical, partly metaphysical, such as two students of science might discuss together. Of some of them we find traces in Dante's other writings; as, *e.g.*, of the return of souls to the stars under whose influence they had been born, from which, in one form of Platonism, they were believed to have come (*Par.* iv. 52). The other questions turn mainly on the zoology of the time, such as suited the studies of the physician.

While on his thick-knobbed staff, from pear-tree torn,
Alphesibœus leant, that he might speak.

And then he said, "That souls of men ascend 20
Up to those stars whence they came down to us,
Within our bodies a new home to find ;
That snow-white swans make all Caÿster's banks
Re-echo with their songs, in mildest clime
Rejoicing, and the marshes of the vale ;— 25
That the dumb fishes leave the deeper sea
In shoals, where rivers first approach the bounds
Of Nereus ;—that Hyrcanian tigers stain,
With crimson gore, the heights of Caucasus ;
That Libyan serpent with its scaly tail 30
Makes furrows in the sand :—at all this I
Have ceased to wonder ; for to all that live
Appropriate environment brings joy ;
But Mopsus moves my wonder, moves it too
In all the shepherds that with me abide 35
In fair Sicilian fields, that he prefers
Where Ætna smokes, the Cyclops' cave and rocks."

So spake he. Then all hot with panting breath
Comes Melibœus : scarce had he exclaimed
"O Tityrus !" when all the elders mocked 40
His youthful, high-pitched voice, as once of yore
Sicanians mocked when they Sergestus saw
Snatched from the rock. And then the old man raised
His grey hairs from the grass, and to the youth,
Whose nostrils still were panting, thus began : 45

"Ah friend o'er-young, what fresh-born care is this,
That makes thee vex thy lungs with pace so quick ?"

²⁰ In all these instances there were the workings of the law of "like to like," or at least of the choice of a suitable environment. What Alphesibœus could not understand was that Mopsus should be content to remain in such a Cyclops' den as Bologna. The personal Cyclops is identified with Romeo de' Pepoli, then ruler of that city, under whose protection Joannes lived. Romeo is reported to have been a Ghibelline (*Vill.* ix. 132 ; *Troja, Veltro*, pp. 179-180), but Dante apparently had personal reasons for distrusting him.

²⁹ At this point Melibœus-Perini arrives, panting in hot haste as the bearer of the last Eclogue from Joannes. The older scholars smile as when the Sicilians saw Sergestus torn from the rock to which he clung when his boat foundered (*Æn.* v. 200-283).

³⁰ Tityrus raises his head and asks the reason of the breathless haste. Then, as with a taste for a marvel after the manner of Ovid, lo ! of its own accord—for Melibœus is too much out of breath to play on it—the reed breathes forth the first line of the Eclogue which the scholar had sent to his master. The hundred verses stand for the actual ninety-seven of the Eclogue.

⁴⁶ Pelorus stands for Ravenna, as the true Sicily, the true home of shepherds and their poets.

He nothing answered, but his lips then touched,
 His trembling lips, the pipe of oaten straw,
 And thence no single note fell on the ear, 60
 But, as the youth was striving to draw out
 Tones from his reed, the reed itself breathes forth—
 I speak a thing most wonderful yet true—
 "Beneath the hills well-watered, where we see
 Savena meet with Reno." Had he then 65
 But thrice upon the mouth-piece blown, I trow
 That he with five-score songs had soothed the ear
 Of silent shepherds, and that Tityrus
 Had listened, and with him Alphisibœus.
 And him Alphisibœus thus addressed, 60
 Our Tityrus, "Would'st thou, honoured old man, dare
 To leave Pelorum's dewy plains, and seek
 The Cyclops' cavern?"

And he made reply :
 "Why dost thou doubt? Why, dear friend, question me?" 68
 "Why do I doubt? Why question thee?" then spake
 Alphisibœus. "Hear'st thou not what sound
 Comes from the flute in its melodious might,
 God-given, like the reeds, the breeze-born reeds,
 As rumour spread far off the change that passed, 70
 O'er the king's temples, in their foul disgrace,
 When he, as Bromios bade him, straightway changed
 Pactolus' sands to hue of glittering gold?
 Since he calls thee to where the shore is strewn
 With Ætna's pumice dust, O blest old man, 75
 Trust not delusive favour: look with pity
 Upon the hallowed spot where Dryads haunt,
 And on thy flocks. The mountain height, the downs,
 The streams, will weep, bereaved of thee: the Nymphs,
 Fearing worse things, will weep for thee with me. 80

68 The king is Midas, who asked and obtained the power of turning whatever he touched into gold. When Bromius (=Bacchus) taught him that he might free himself from the power which had become a bondage by bathing in the Pactolus, the reeds whispered the fact that the king had ass's ears (*Met.* xi. 143-146). That spontaneous utterance found, so Alphisibœus thought, a parallel in the Eclogue-song that had flowed from the reed without human lips applied to it. He excuses himself for thinking that a marvel like that might have overcome Dante's hesitation. He urges that he should still refuse to trust himself. The Dryads of Ravenna and all his friends call on him to stay. They felt that he could not venture without risk to his life.

And the ill-will Pachynus bears to us,
 Will all subside. And we too shall regret,
 We shepherds, having known thee. Blest old man,
 Abandon not the pastures and the springs,
 On which thy name hath stamped a deathless life." 85
 "O more, by merit more, than half this heart,"
 Touching his breast, spake aged Tityrus,
 "Mopsus, in love bound up with me for those
 Who fled Pyreneus' passion wild of yore,
 Because I dwell, the Po upon my right, 90
 And on the left the Rubicon, where sea
 Of Adria bounds the fair Æmilian land,
 Commends to us the pastures by the shore
 Of Ætna, little knowing that we both
 Dwell in the soft grass of Trinacrian height, 95
 More fruitful far than all Sicilian hills
 In food for flocks and herds. And yet, though rocks
 Of Ætna fall far short of those green fields
 Pelorum boasts, I fain would leave my flock,
 And as thou wishest, come to visit thee, 100
 My Mopsus, but for fear of Polypheme."
 And then Alphasibœus made reply,
 "Who fears not Polypheme, with human blood
 Still wont to stain his lips, from that same hour
 When Galatea saw her Acis' limbs, 105

⁸¹ Pachynus, the southern promontory of Sicily, stands probably for the kingdom of Naples, whose ruler, Robert II. (vol. i. p. cli.; *Purg.* vii. 119; *Par.* xix. 130, xx. 63) had shown himself one of Dante's bitterest enemies. His hostility would cease because it would be satisfied with what would be Dante's ruin. That ruin might even bring trouble on his friends.

⁸² The poet's consciousness that his name will live, and that without writing a Latin epic, reminds us of *H.* iv. 102; *Purg.* xi. 98; *Par.* xvii. 118-120.

⁸³ Alphasibœus was a bosom friend, but Mopsus also, as a votary of the Muses, might claim some share in his affections. The lines allude to the story in *Met.* v. 287-331, that Pyreneus had invited the Muses to take shelter beneath his roof; that he then offered them violence; that they took their winged flight from the tower of his house, and that he threw himself after them and perished. Was this a gentle warning to Joannes not to claim too exclusive an intimacy with the Muses whom he loved?

⁸⁴ Mopsus had written as though Dante were living (as, of course, he was literally) between the Po and the Rubicon, in the Æmilian region of Romagna, and sang the praises of his own Ætna (*i.e.*, Bologna), as though that were the home of poets. He was ignorant that Ravenna was the true Trinacria (= Sicily), the land where Theocritus would have loved to dwell. And his Pelorum was "green." It was the symbol of the national poetry, in the spoken language of the people, which Mopsus despised, but which was destined to be far more fertile than the Ætnean region, the classical poetry, which he loved.

⁸⁵ Polyphemus is, as before, Romeo de' Pepoli (l. 25). It was Dante's distrust of him that led him to decline his friend's invitation. The outrages named are those attributed to the literal Polyphemus (*Met.* xiii. 739-898). Possibly they refer to some recent acts of cruelty on Romeo's part.

Poor Acis! torn asunder! Scarcely she
 Herself escaped. Would spell of love prevail
 When his fierce rage was kindled to such heat?
 And scarce could Achæmenides restrain
 His soul from parting, when he looked and saw 110
 The Cyclops, with his comrades' blood besprent.
 Ah, thou, my bosom friend, I pray thee, check
 That fearful wish that Reno and the Nymph
 Thou praisest, close, within their boundaries,
 This honoured head, to gather wreaths for which, 115
 Wreaths that fade not, e'en now prepares himself
 The dresser of the vineyard."

Tityrus,

Smiling in concord with him, heart and soul,
 In silence listened to his scholar's words,
 As by the whole flock spoken. But because 120
 The horses of the chariot of the Sun
 Were moving downwards through the ether pure,
 So that the shadows o'er all nature spread,
 The shepherds, leaving valley cool, and woods,
 Followed their flocks that took their homeward way, 125
 And shaggy goats went foremost, as they took
 Their path to soft green meadows; and meanwhile
 Iolas crafty, listening stood hard by,
 Who heard all this and told all this to us:
 He sings to us, O Mopsus, we to thee. 130

¹⁰⁰ Achæmenides was one of the companions of Ulysses, whom Æneas encountered in Sicily (*Æn.* iii. 590-681). Here also there may probably be an historical allusion now irrecoverably lost to us.

¹¹³ The Naiad is the nymph of the Savena joined with the Reno, as in *Ecl.* iii. 1. The "Virgin" is, of course, Daphne, transformed into a laurel (*Met.* i. 486).

The expectation that the laurel wreath was ready to be cut for him had an unlooked-for fulfilment. The Eclogue did not reach his scholar-friend till the hand that wrote it was cold in death, and the laurel wreath was placed upon his brow by Guido da Polenta.

¹¹⁷ Tityrus-Dante recognised that the words of Alpheisibœus were those of the whole company of his friends. He therefore would abide by his decision, and would not go to Bologna.

¹²¹ The steeds are those of the sun-chariot, now hastening to its setting. The conversation was over, and the friends separated. Meanwhile Iolas (Guido da Polenta) had been listening, and he it was (the writer of the Eclogue seems now to distinguish between himself and the ideal Tityrus of the poem) who had reported the dialogue to Dante, as he did to his scholar at Bologna. In the original the last words of the last line *poimus* (as an equivalent for *ποιούμεν*) we have a noteworthy instance of Dante's boldness as the coiner of new words to meet his wants, a proof also that he had at least some knowledge of Greek.

STUDIES.

STUDY I.

THE GENESIS AND GROWTH OF THE "COMMEDIA."



I.

IT is not easy to assign a date to the time when the first germ of Dante's great poem was planted in the fruitful soil of his brain and heart. One gifted with a prophet's insight might, I am inclined to think, have seen it, in its promise and potency of a yet unconscious life, within a few days of that marvellous May morning which transformed and transfigured the whole nature of the wondrous boy (*V. N. c. 1*). From that hour, as we know, Beatrice was never absent from his thoughts, worshipped with all the power—such as we often discern even in natures less sensitive than Dante's—of a boy's idolising devotion. One half of the *Commedia* (if indeed we may distinguish where it is impossible to divide) was involved in the manner in which that thought dominated his mind and heart during the whole period of his boyhood. Nor could the other half be well absent. Twenty years before Giotto painted the Bargello portrait, Dante's eyes must have had that dreamy far-away look, that power of seeing things which others do not see, that "other-worldliness" that tells of a mind to which Heaven and Hell are the most real of all realities. The teaching which influenced his youth would tend to foster that tendency. His early recollections of Brunetto Latini, before he had seen, behind the veil of outward culture, the depravity which it concealed, were those of one from whom he had learnt "how man attaineth to eternity" (*H. xv. 85*). The preaching of the Franciscan and Dominican friars (the former, we may remember, were established at what is now the Church of Santa Croce) had not yet lost its savour, and their sermons

would tell him, with all the vividness which characterised mediæval thought, of the penalties of the lost and the beatific vision of the saints of God. Every mass that he heard would bring before him the thought of that region of the intermediate state in which souls that had departed with an imperfect holiness were purified from the stains of earth. Looking both to his gifts and his environment, it might almost be said of him, as it was said of the prophet to whom he turned in after years (comp. *H. i. 32 n.*), with the natural sympathy of one who saw in him a character like his own, that he too was "sanctified" from the earliest dawn of life, and "ordained to be a prophet unto the nations" (*Jer. i. 5*).

The studies of advancing youth—I am still speaking of the period before the story of the *Vita Nuova* begins—would tend in the same direction. Virgil was then, as in after years, the Master to whom he owed most of his mental nurture (*H. i. 85*), and the Sixth Book of the *Æneid* would impress upon his mind its vivid and indelible pictures of Tartarus and the Elysian fields. So he would come to blend, in that strange weird manner which so often startles us as we read the *Commedia*, the forms, names, and legends of classical antiquity with those which had at least a starting-point in Scripture, and which permeated the mind of the thirteenth century in Western Christendom. And when he came to study, as he must have done before he wrote the first sonnet in the *V. N.*, the poets of his own fatherland, the choice which he made of Guido Guinicegli of Bologna, as the one in whom alone he recognised his "Master,"

"When I thus heard his name who was of old
My sire, and theirs, my country's nobler men,
Skilled to use love-rhymes sweet and manifold,"

—*Purg. xxvi. 97-99,*

was singularly significant. For Guido, in spite of the sin that stained his life, led his readers into the region of the Unseen and the Eternal, and the love of which he wrote was therefore that of the higher Erôs, of Aphrodite Urania. I take two passages by way of sample from his *Canzone* beginning

"*Avvegnache del maggio più per tempo.*"

"In this blind world below we prove too well
That all mankind in grief and anguish dwell,
While Fortune turns her wheel in ceaseless round ;

Blest is the soul which leaves the fruitless strife,
 And seeks in Heaven the true eternal life,
 Where only perfect joy and peace are found.

.
 Gaze on the joy, the bliss, wherein doth dwell
 My Lady fair, in Heaven incoronate,
 Whence comes to thee thy hope in Paradise,
 She now, all holy, thee remembers well,
 And, though in Heaven, thy heart doth contemplate,
 Which, for her sake, as if deserted, lies.
 She sees it painted in such blessed guise
 That what was here but as a marvel strange,
 Finds there its likeness true that sees no change ;
 So much the more as it is better known,
 How, welcomed as their own,
 The angels hailed her with glad melodies.
 Thy spirits have brought back their tidings rare,
 For ofttimes thither they in travel fare ;
 Of thee she speaketh with the souls in bliss
 And saith to them, ' While yet I lived on earth,
 I had from him all honour due to worth,
 Still praising me in those famed songs of his ;
 And I pray God, our Lord and Master true,
 As best may meet your wish, to comfort you."

"That strain we heard was of a higher mood," and we cannot wonder that Dante should have turned to it rather than to the earlier Italian poets, such as Frederick II., or his Chancellor, Pier della Vigne, or Jacopo Lentino, the "notary" of *Purg.* xxiv. 56, as a model for imitation, that it should have seemed to him to put him on a higher level than that of his personal friends Guido Cavalcanti or Cino of Pistoia, in whose sonnets and *canzoni* there was more of the earthly erotic character. He was content to leave to Cino the place due to the "poet of love," he claimed for himself the higher title of the "poet of righteousness" (*V. E.* ii. 2). Not a few of the noblest passages of the *Commedia* sound in our ears as echoes of Guinicelli. In *H.* v. 100,

"Amor, che al cor gentil ratto s'apprende,"

we have an almost verbal reproduction of the opening line of Guido's *canzone*,

"Al cor gentile ripara sempre amore,"

while in the similitude, not then hackneyed as it has become since, of "true as the needle to the pole,"

"*E dirizzar lo ago in ver la stella,*"

we find the original of Dante's (*Par.* xii. 28)

"And from the heart of one of those new lights
There came a voice which made me turn to see,
E'en as the star the needle's course incites."

And so, from the first, we note the undertone of melancholy, the "pathetic minor," which, even in the bright dawn of youth, pervades the poet's reverie. He stands among the crowds of his associates, in the terms which Milton has made familiar, not as *L'Allegro*, but as *Il Penseroso*, and the latter poem might almost serve, from first to last, as an ideal picture of Dante's student life.

What I have said as to the character of the early poems lies almost on the surface. The vision of *Sonn.* i. is one which he could not remember without a shudder, in which he learnt to see afterwards a prophecy of the valley of the shadow. The death, early in his intimacy with the married Beatrice, of her best loved friend, whom I have identified with the Matilda of the Earthly Paradise (see note on *Purg.* xxviii. 40.), leads his thoughts to the region within the veil. The Lord of Angels had called her to His glory, and the world was poorer for her absence (*V. N.* c. 3). Beatrice's seeming scorn makes him feel the woes of lost souls, the *discacciati tormentosi*, such as he paints in the *Inferno* (*V. N.* c. 14, *Sonn.* vii.). Soon, in the *Canzone* (ii.) which begins—

"*Donne, ch' avete intelletto d'amore,*"

we note the foreboding that the time of his beatitude will not be long. Heaven feels that it lacks somewhat of its completeness as long as Beatrice is not there. It is only the forbearance of God—forbearance for his sake—that prolongs her life on earth.

"My well-beloved, now suffer ye in peace
That this your hope, as long as I shall please,
Wait, where one dwells whom loss of her shall try,
And who shall tell the damned in Hell's unrest,
'I have beheld the hopes of all the blest.'"

There, if not before, I see not the germ only of the *Commedia*, but the first stirrings of its life, as yet, it may be, tentative, almost, one might say, tentacular, in its workings, throwing out its feelers in this and that direction, and drawing in nutriment for its future

work. The death of Beatrice's father (*V. N.* c. 22)—he also is spoken of as "passing from this life to eternal glory"—tended more and more to foster this sense of nearness to the invisible world, and soon that sense took form in the words which came unbidden to his lips: "It must needs be that one day the gentle Beatrice herself must die" (*V. N.* c. 23), and that thought was followed by the prophetic vision in which he saw the forms of sorrowing ladies who told him that she had indeed departed from this world; and then he beheld a multitude of angels gazing on a white cloud of dazzling whiteness, and singing their *Hosanna in excelsis*. And then he thought that he looked on her dead body and the ladies covered her head with a white veil, and her face was so full of lowliness that it seemed to say to him, "I am about to see the source of all peace," and he called on Death ("*dolcissima Morte*") to come and release him from his sorrow, and then saw all the mysteries of grief which are wont to be celebrated in the chamber of the dead, and he looked up to Heaven and said, "O fairest soul, how blessed is he who sees thee!" The vision clothed itself in the marvellous *Canzone* (iv.) to which I content myself with referring the reader.

Every month, as the *V. N.* (c. 26) tells us, seemed to bring Beatrice nearer to the heavenly life. Men said of her, as she passed, "This is no woman, but one of the fairest of the Angels of Heaven"—"This is a miracle. Blessed be the Lord who knoweth how to work so wonderfully!" Not only did she win honour and praise herself, but she brought praise and honour to those with whom she associated (*V. N.* c. 27). And then this ripeness for Heaven bore what must have seemed its natural fruit. The Lord of Righteousness called her to Himself, and glorified her by placing her under the banner of the Blessed Mary, the Queen whose name had been so often on Beatrice's lips, ever uttered with profoundest reverence (*V. N.* c. 29). Of his own sorrow, of that of the whole city of which she had been the fairest ornament, I have spoken with sufficient fulness in the *Life of Dante* (i. pp. xlvii, li.), and, for a like reason, I pass over the intermediate stages of the history of the "*donna gentile*," in its literal or allegorical meanings, and proceed at once to the closing vision of the *Vita Nuova*, in which we may rightly see a more developed, and therefore a more defined, growth of the germ which we have

already seen in an earlier embryonic stage. He had beheld once before (*V. N.* c. 40), in the ninth hour of the day, the form of the glorified Beatrice in crimson apparel, as he had seen her when she first met his gaze. He began to repent and reproach himself for his disloyalty to her memory. And then, not long afterwards, there came another memorable vision, following on a sonnet (*S.* 31) in which he records that his sighs had passed beyond the *primum mobile* to the Empyrean sphere, the dwelling-place of God and of the angels and His saints, and then he adds (*V. N.* c. 43):—

“After this sonnet there appeared to me a marvellous vision in which I saw things which made me propose not to speak more of this Blessed One till I could treat of her more worthily. And to reach this goal I study, as she truly knows, as much as lies in my power, so that if it shall please Him, by whom all things live, that my life continue for some years to come, I hope to say of her what has never yet been said of any woman. And then, may it please Him, who is the Lord of Courtesy (comp. for the phrase, *H.* ii. 58 a.), that my soul may have power to turn and see the glory of its Mistress, that is to say, of that blessed Beatrice who gloriously looks upon the face of Him, *qui est per omnia secula benedictus.*”

The *genesis* of the *Commedia* was thus obviously completed. The outline was at least sketched in the art-studio of the poet's soul. But there followed, as the words indicate, a necessary, though not, it may be, a prolonged, period of self-training. The date assigned by experts to the composition of the *Vita Nuova* is 1297, and as the assumed date of the vision with which the *Commedia* opens is the Passion and Easter-tide of 1300, we have at least two or three years of preparation. We ask how that interval was employed? what was the nature of the preparation?

II.

The first question which would present itself to a man like Dante, with a purpose thus definitely formed, would be as to the vehicle in which he would embody his thoughts. In what language should he write? The training of the student, the habits of the time, his admiring reverence for Virgil, Ovid, Lucan, Statius, would all have suggested Latin. The remonstrances addressed to him twenty years later by Joannes de Virgilio (vol. i. p. cxxiv.) show that this was what was expected by scholars of a scholar. When Petrarch gained the poet's laureate wreath, it was on the

strength of his Latin epic "Africa" far more than on that of his sonnets. The Ilarian letter indicates, though one receives its testimony with reserve, that he had begun a Latin poem, at some time or other, after the orthodox Virgilian fashion (vol. i. p. lxxxix.)—

" *Ultima regna canam, fluido contermina mundo.*"

It was well, as I have said, that he changed his mind. The poem of which this might have been the beginning would doubtless have been a marvel in its way. It would have reproduced Virgilian imagery in approximately Virgilian language. There would have been pictures of the threefold regions of the unseen world, in which Beatrice and Virgil and Dante himself would have played their parts in Latin hexameters. It might, from time to time, have found editors and commentators, possibly even translators, or it might have slept in the dust of libraries forgotten and untouched. The process of thought which led to the change of purpose may be traced with sufficient clearness in the treatise *De Vulgari Eloquentia* and in the *Convito*. Though both were written, wholly or in part, as their references to his sufferings show, after his exile, they reproduce the thoughts of past years, and indicate the reasons of his final choice. In the first of these he begins, with a method and solemnity which reminds one of Hooker, with treating of the two forms of speech which were open to him. He is entering on an untried field, in which he had no forerunner. "*Verbo aspirante de cælis*," he will unfold for those who speak their mother-tongue the reasons which lead him to think, as he compares the *lingua vulgaris* with the language used by scholars, and taught in the schools, that the former is the more noble of the two. Speech, he goes on to say, is the special attribute of man. Brute creatures have it not. Angels need it not, for they have an "ineffable sufficiency of intellect by which one is known to another with perfect clearness, or they see all things in the clear mirror of the Divine Mind" (*V. E.* i. 2; *Par.* xxvi. 106, 107). Man needed it, and therefore it was given to man. It was reasonable to think that it had been bestowed on Adam at his creation, and that the first word which he uttered was *El* or *Eli*, as the name of God (*V. E.* i. 4; *Par.* xxvi. 134), and though God did not need man's speech to know

man's thoughts even before they were conceived in the mind, yet we may, with all reverence, say that it was acceptable to Him that His own gift of speech should be the medium of their utterance. Others may be so blinded by partiality that they may think their own city and country the noblest in the world,¹ their own speech one compared with which all other tongues are as those of barbarians. It is not so with him. He is a citizen of the world ("*mundus est patria velut piscibus æquor*"), and though he has loved Florence from his youth upwards, though he loves it yet more in his exile from it, and thinks that no city on earth is pleasanter or fairer, yet, as a scholar and historian, he must assign to Hebrew the honour of having been the primeval language of mankind (*V. E. i. 6*). The pride of man seeking to scale the very heavens in the Tower of Babel led to the confusion of tongues, and only the descendants of Shem inherited some fragments of the ancient speech. Passing, as from the limitations of his knowledge was inevitable, to a narrower range of inquiry, he takes a rapid survey of the spoken languages of Europe, which he classifies, as in *H. xxxiii. 80*, according to their formula of affirmation, under four groups: (1.) That of *jo* or *ja*, including Slavonian, Hungarian, German, Saxon, English, and others. (2.) That of *si*, including Spanish, French, and Latin, represented by Italian, as in *H. xxvii. 33*. (3.) That of *oc*, in the south-west of Europe, specially in the region thence known as Languedoc. (4.) That of *oil* or *oui*, in Northern France, bounded by Germany on the east, and the "English Sea" on the north (*V. E. i. 8*). He notes in passing that the last three have many points of contact with each other, while the first stands apart by itself, and illustrates the fact by some eight or nine examples. Still narrowing his range of inquiry in accordance with the purpose which had led him to undertake it, he confines himself to the dialects of Italy, of which he notes not less than fourteen distinct varieties. Men of letters might give a preference to the language of *oil*, in which had been written "the achievements of the Trojans and the Romans, and the Arthurian legends," but his love was given to that of *si*, to the Italian of which those who had sung most sweetly and subtly were the familiar friends and, as it were, members of its household

¹ The thought is expressed in a proverb worth preserving: "*Petramala*" (an insignificant country town, much as we might say "Little Pedlington") "*civitas amplissima est, et patria majori parti filiorum Ada*" (*V. E. i. 6*).

("familiaris et domestici"). Among these he names "Cino of Pistoia and his friend," and he leaves us, in his reticence, half humble and half proud, to guess who that friend was. Each of the fourteen dialects are then passed under his scrutiny, and are for the most part condemned as rough, barbarous, inadequate for the poet's use. Rome occupies a position of bad pre-eminence; the speech of the hill-country of Casentino and Prato comes next (*V. E.* i. 11). Sicilian, the language of the earlier Italian poets, including Frederick II. and Manfred, had a better reputation (*V. E.* i. 12). Tuscany boasted of its purity, but the boast was vain. There was a provincial twang ("*non curialia sed municipalia*") even in Guido of Arezzo, Bonagiunta of Lucca, and Brunetto Latini of Florence. Exceptions to that rule, approximations to excellence, were found in Guido Cavalcanti, Lapo Gianni, and "one other" (again we are left to guess), and in Cino of Pistoia (*V. E.* i. 13). A passing tribute to the greatness of Sordello as great not only in poetry but in every form of speech, is associated with a favourable judgment of the dialects of Lombardy, and that used by the *littérateurs* of Bologna, such as Guido Guinicelli, Guido Ghislieri and others (*V. E.* i. 15), but the true perfect speech of Italy, "*illustre, cardinale, aulicum, et curiale*," "*illuminans et illuminatum*," was still to seek. It was the "panther," the symbol of animal perfection,¹ of which he was in search, and he could not doubt that he had the nets wherewith to take it and tame it for his own use (i. 16). With that haughty consciousness of a power to be, if not the creator, at least the artificer, of a new language which all Italy should welcome, he sufficiently vindicates the decision which led him to cancel his first sketch, if indeed it ever existed, and instead of

"Ultima regna canam, fluido contermina mundo,"

to write

"Nel mezzo del cammin di nostra vita."

It is noticeable, however, that through the whole treatise (as indeed in the *Convito* also), there is not a single word which implies the existence, even in plan and purpose, of the *Commedia*.

¹ The symbolism may have originated in the rarity and beauty of the animal. Dante's master, Latini, probably from a fanciful etymology of the name, describes it as "*Amico di tutti animali*," and this would fall in with Dante's thoughts as to the perfect speech for poets (*Tes.*, v. 62).

That, I take it, he worked at in secret, not caring to talk of it till the great work was finished as a *κτῆμα ἰς ἀεί,* a perpetual possession for Italy and for the world.

The *Convito* which, it must be remembered, was also written (in part, at least) in exile, and before the *V. E.* (*Conv.* i. 3, 5), deals with the question in a less systematic form, but for that very reason is more interesting as the expression of Dante's feelings. There too he had to decide whether he should write in Latin or Italian, and he gives his reasons for choosing the latter. Some are fanciful enough. The book was a commentary on his *Canzoni*, which were in Italian, and the commentator is the servant of his text. Latin was the "sovrano" speech, Italian the subordinate; there would be therefore an invasion of the right order in writing a Latin exposition of an Italian text (*Conv.* i. 6, 7). More true and natural was the thought that by using Italian he would reach a far wider circle of readers, and so far as he had things to utter which it was good for men to know, he would be a more universal benefactor (*Conv.* i. 8), and therefore acquire the friendship (we note the heart-yearnings of the lonely exile) of a far larger number. This was a sufficient reason for his not choosing Latin. And the thought of choosing any other modern speech than that of his fatherland, rouses him to a burning white heat of indignation. The history of Provençal literature was that of the prostitution of noble gifts to vilest uses ("*hanno fatta di donna, meretrice*"). Those who had written in it in Italy were "base, abominable, unworthy sons," were led only by their own blindness, by malignant prejudice, by their craving for vain-glory, by their envy of the greatness of others, by their vileness and pusillanimity, which made them the slaves of each passing wave of popular opinion. Like bad workmen who find fault with their materials or their tools, they threw the blame of their failure as poets on the language which they had used, and which they deserted for another. They had failed in Italian; they might succeed in Provençal. It was not so with him. He had sufficient loftiness of soul to feel self-confidence ("*sempre il magnanimo si magnifica in suo cuore*"). He loved his mother-tongue with a passionate devotion, which had ripened, as it were, into friendship. It had been his greatest benefactor, was associated with his earliest memories (*Par.* xv. 121-123), had led him to the way of knowledge. Without it he

could not have learnt Latin. The fuller intimacy which rose out of his bringing it into the closer service of rhyme and rhythm had confirmed that friendship. Above all, he had always thought in that language. It had been his companion in his highest contemplations, his most subtle questionings. Therefore he would use it (here also there is not the remotest allusion to the *Commedia*) for his *Convito*. So should a thousand guests partake of that banquet and leave some baskets full of fragments for himself; so should the speech of Italy be as a "new light, a new sun, 'to those who are in darkness and obscurity'" (*Conv.* i. 13).

That point then was settled. Here, also, he took his own line and formed a *parte per se stesso*. He would write in Italian. He felt confident that he, at least, would have no occasion to find fault with his tools, that, as he said, after he had finished his work, even rhymes would be his servants and not his masters (*Comp.* vol. i. p. lxxviii.)

But then came a question which must have called for some serious thought. What form of verse should he adopt? The earlier Italian poets who had preceded him had been essentially lyric in their character, and had confined themselves to sonnets, *ballate*, and *canzoni*, such as he himself had used in his Minor Poems, and these were unfitted for the continuity of a poem of the nature of an epic. So far as I know he had no Italian predecessor in the use of the *terza rima*. If he was not the inventor of that form, he was at least the first to import it from the literature of Provence, in which it is said to have been used by Arnould Daniel, for whom, both in *V. E.* ii. 2, 6, 10, 13, and *Purg.* xxvi. 119, Dante expresses the warmest possible admiration, and who had originated the yet more complicated and unmanageable *sestina*. It commended itself, we may believe, on more than one ground. It lent itself readily to a continuous narrative. It presented the kind of difficulty from which Dante did not shrink, and which it gave him an actual joy to overcome. He felt sure, as the writer of the *Ottimo Commento* says that he had told his sons, that it would never make him write otherwise than he had meant to write, that the very necessity of finding rhymes would often be suggestive of new thoughts. Whatever mastery he had gained in other more or less artificial forms of poetry would stand him in good stead here. If, at first, it might

seem to retard his progress, he soon found that he had acquired a full control over it, and probably learnt before long even to think in *terza rima*, so that the "spontaneous numbers" flowed readily from his pen. And then also it connected itself with the strange mystic reverence for the number three, which shows itself in the *Vita Nuova* (V. N. c. 30). A poem in honour of Beatrice ought to be in the form which was most identified with the symbol of her excellence, and which was also the symbol of the Divine Perfection. A like profound reverence for the mystical significance of numbers showed itself, after the choice of the metre, in the plan of the whole poem. For him the number ten was the most perfect of all numbers; the square of that number carried that perfection to a yet higher power, and therefore the poem was to consist of a hundred cantos. But the threefold nature of the Unseen World, as it presented itself to his thoughts, compelled him to divide the poem into three parts, or, as he calls them, Cantiques, and as it was natural to think of the first canto as a prelude or introduction, Hell, Purgatory, and Paradise had thirty-three cantos assigned to each. It would scarcely have surprised us had the love of self-imposed restraint, which characterised him, as it has characterised other great masters of his art, led him to a like limitation in regard to the number of the lines in each canto. Here, however, he wisely drew the line. He felt that such a restraint would interfere with the freedom of his thoughts, and he chose therefore to assert his freedom, taking 140 as an approximate standard.¹

It is possible that he may have begun his poems before fixing on a title, possible also, of course, that he may have chosen it from the first. The fact that he speaks of it in *H. xvi. 128* as the *Commedia* is, as far as it goes, in favour of the latter hypothesis. The reasons which he gives for so naming it in the *Ep. to Can Grande* are sufficiently familiar to most Dante students. He knows enough Greek (though his explanation of "tragedy"² is somewhat startling) to interpret *Comædia* as a *village song* (*villanus cantus*). He knows enough of the traditions of dramatic art to

¹ The *Inferno* contains 4588 lines, the *Purgatorio* 4756, the *Paradiso* 4738, giving 14,082 for the hundred cantos.

² He connects the word rightly enough with *τῆρας*, but explains it as "*fatidus ad modum kirci*." He does not appear to know the other derivation of *Comædia* as from *καμπος* (= revelry).

feel that a tragedy begins with joy and ends with sorrow, that a comedy begins with trouble and ends with gladness.¹ His poem began with Hell and ended with Paradise, and on that ground might be styled a comedy. And there was yet another reason. Tragedy was supposed to speak always in the lofty and stately language of the "grand style." Comedy had a wider range, might say the very thing the poet wished to say, in homeliest and plainest fashion, and yet was allowed to rise at times to a strain of higher tone. Not without significance does Dante quote the line of Horace (*Ep. ad Pis.* l. 93):—

"Interdum tamen et vocem comœdia tollit."

With these thoughts there mingled something of a proud humility. For him the epic and the tragedy were near of kin. To have called his poem by either name would have implied something like a rivalry with the master whom he loved and honoured. He was content to call it a comedy—Terence was the writer most familiar to him as a comic author (*Purg.* xxii. 97)—and under that title to write what had remained "unattempted yet in prose or rhyme" by Terence or any other author. We may, however, perhaps doubt whether he would have chosen that name at the end of his work had he not made choice of it at the beginning. The grim grotesqueness of many of the pictures of the *Inferno*, the games of the demons with the sinners in the seething pitch (*H.* xxi., xxii.), the reciprocal transformations of man and serpent (*H.* xxv.), were probably brought in as part of the comic element, like the equally grotesque figures in mediæval cathedrals, but these cease as he passes into the other divisions of his poem. He invokes Calliope (*Purg.* i. 9), Urania (*Purg.* xxix. 41), Apollo (*Par.* i. 13), but never Thalia. The "comedy" has become for him a "*poema sacro*" (*Par.* xxv. 1); and so far he anticipates the epithet of *Divina* which later writers have attached to it, and which first appears in the Venice edition of 1554.

¹ (*Ep. to C. G. c. 10 n.*) Fraticelli quotes from the *Catholicon* of Fra Giovanni of Genoa (1286); "*Unde in salutatione solemus mittere et oplare tragicum principium et comicum finem, id est, bonum principium et latum finem.*"

III

The language and the outward form of the poem being thus determined, there would come the question what was to be its scope and purpose? Was it to aim at anything beyond a description of the three kingdoms of the dead and the glorification of Beatrice? His dedicatory Epistle to Can Grande, as characteristic in its way as Spenser's Epistle to Sir Walter Raleigh setting forth the plan of the *Faerie Queene*, and presenting many suggestive coincidences with it,¹ answers that question. He adopts for his own "sacred poem" the fourfold method of interpretation which applied to the sacred books, poems or otherwise, of Scripture. And so the subject of the whole *Commedia* taken literally is the "state of souls after death" (*Ep. to C. G. c. 8*). But allegorically it takes a wider range, and includes the whole moral government of God, and its subject is, "Man, so far as by merit or demerit, in the exercise of the freedom of his will, he is under a system of rewards and punishments." It is obvious that the distinction which he draws involves the conclusion that he meant men to see, in the distribution of those rewards and punishments on earth, examples of the same laws as those which work out their completion in the regions behind the veil. Each man may find in his own experience, or in the history of the world, the anticipation of Hell and Purgatory and Paradise; may see in the poet's pictures to what possible depths of degradation he may fall, how he may repent and rise to higher things on the "stepping-stones of his dead self," how, even on earth, he may attain to the citizenship of the true Rome of which Christ is a Roman (*Purg. xxxii. 102*), to the heavenly Jerusalem.

In writing to a man like Can Grande, whose position and character placed him outside the range of esoteric discipleship, Dante was content to hint at the key which was to open the treasure-house,

¹ I am not aware that any writer on Dante has noticed the parallelism, but it will be seen that it is sufficiently significant. Spenser describes his book as a "a continued Allegory, or darke Conceit." The story of King Arthur is but the outward framework of the allegory. The Faery Queene is at once Glory and "the glorious person of our Sovereaine the Queen," as Beatrice is both the woman whom Dante had loved and the Wisdom which teaches him a true theology. But as Elizabeth was not only "a most royal Queene or Empresse," but also "a most vertuous and beautiful lady," she appears in the poem not as Gloriana only, but also as Belphebe. So also the Red-Cross Knight is at once the symbol of holiness, and of the English people, Duessa of falsehood in general and of the Church of Rome, or perhaps also of Mary Queen of Scots in particular.

to apply his method on the largest, and therefore the vaguest, scale. Those to whom it was given to know the inner mysteries of the poem would soon discover in Dante's language that it was "*polysensum*"¹ (*Ep. to C. G. c. 7*), a poem of manifold meanings (Dante does not pass beyond the literal and allegoric, and leaves the moral and anagogic, or mystic, for others to trace out), and that the end he aimed at also was manifold. There might be a nearer and a more remote object present to the writer's mind. He will confine himself—he is obviously dealing with a pupil dull of hearing and slow of heart to understand—passing over all more subtle interpretations, to saying that what he aimed at was to "rescue those who are living in this life from a state of misery, and to lead them to a state of felicity" (*ibid. c. 18*). But for us, as for the inner circle of Dante's personal disciples, if indeed he had any, it is open to seek for more meanings and more purposes than those thus roughly adumbrated, and so far the allegorising schools of interpreters are fully within their rights. To take a few salient instances, where there is something like a consensus, Beatrice is the daughter of Folco de' Portinari; she is also the symbol of a true Philosophy (the subordinate philosophy symbolised by the "*donna gentile*" of *V. N. c. 36*; *Conv. ii. 13* disappears from the *Commedia*), of Catholic theology, of the supreme contemplative wisdom which includes both philosophy and theology. Virgil is the poet on whose lines Dante had framed his own "goodly style" (*H. i. 81-87*). He is also the representative of human wisdom guiding perfectly within its limits, though unable to lead the pilgrim into the region of supernatural light. Lucia (*H. ii. 97 n.*) is the Saint of Syracuse; she is also the grace that illuminates man's natural reason. Cato (*Purg. i. 74*), in like manner, represents the highest form of merely human righteousness. The Centaurs (*H. xii. 56, n.*) symbolise the varied combinations of the brute and spiritual elements in man's life. Geryon (*H. xvii. 1 n.*) is the type of all fraudulent and counterfeit shows of good. The four stars (*Purg. i. 23 n.*) are the cardinal natural virtues of Plato's ethical language; the three which make up the heptad (*Purg. viii. 89*) are the Faith, Hope, Love of Christian ethics. The Mountain Delectable (*H. i. 77 n.*) is the ideal polity after which Dante was striving as the salvation of his

¹ A v. l. gives "*polysensuum*."

country, as well as the ideal righteousness which would be his own salvation. The three beasts which barred his ascent (*H. I.* 31-51 n.), whatever other meanings they may have, had, at all events, one which was moral, and represented sensuality, pride, and greed of gain, while they may point also to states and parties that were characterised by these vices.

As the history of Biblical interpretation shows, however, the student stands in need of guidance in applying this method of many senses even to a poem which was avowedly written to be so interpreted. He may read much between the lines (*e.g.*, the multitudinous fantasies of which the history may be found in Dr. F. W. Farrar's *Bampton Lectures*) which is purely the product of his own brain, possessed by a dominant idea, which was never in the brain of the writer. That seems to me the error into which men like Rossetti and Aroux have fallen. It was not that they were wrong in assuming that there might be more than one allegorical meaning in the symbols of the *Commedia*, but that they constructed a Dante out of their inner consciousness, in the one case, with a mind into which nothing entered but a wild non-religious Ghibellinism; in the other, as in the title of Aroux's book, with the thoughts of a "*revolutionnaire, socialiste, heretique*," concealing a Nihilistic Atheism under the garb of conventional orthodoxy. To escape those perils on the right hand, or the left, we must take the humbler part of inquiring, as far as the investigation is open to us, what were actually the poet's dominant ideas, what he was likely to wish others to read between the lines.

And here the answer to that inquiry is not far off. We find it first in the books which he had written wholly or in part before he began the *Commedia*. These were the *Vita Nuova* and the *De Monarchia*.¹ Beatrice is the subject of the one. The ideal polity which should guide men to righteous government and therefore to blessedness on earth, and to the reward of righteousness in heaven, is the subject of the other. We shall hardly be mistaken if we are prepared to find both those subjects interwoven with the whole plan and framework of the *Commedia*. The elements of the *Confessions* of Augustine and of his *De Civitate Dei* are, as it were, united. That inference is strengthened by a

¹ The date of the *V. N.* is inferred from its being written before Guido Cavalcanti's death. That of the *Mon.* from the absence of any reference to Dante's exile.

fact, subordinate in itself, yet, I think, sufficiently suggestive. The names which such a man as Dante gave his children were, in the nature of the case, likely to be chosen on other grounds than the common ones of sponsorship or relationship. Well-nigh all biographers have dwelt on the pathos of his naming one daughter Beatrice. To me there is something hardly less suggestive in his naming his only other daughter Imperia.¹ Beatrice and Imperia answered respectively to the *Vita Nuova* and the *De Monarchid*. They are evidence of what were the dominant ideas of the poet's mind when he began to write the *Commedia*. One wonders which of the two was his favourite child, and whether they were twins. We have seen, though only in outline, how the Beatrice idea, with some of its ramifying symbolism, was represented in the general plan of the great poem, which was penetrated and pervaded by it. Nor was it less so with the idea represented by the empire. The opening canto brings before us not only the conversion of the sinner, but the restoration of the empire, and through that the regeneration of Italy (*H. i. 100-111*). Virgil is something more than the symbol of human wisdom, the hierophant of the mysteries of Hades, and becomes the poet-prophet of the *Imperium Romanum* who has sung how

“*Tantæ molis erat Romanam condere gentem*”

He has tracked its pre-Christian history (*Æn. vi. 755-854*), and has in noblest words sketched out the true ideal of such an empire's greatness:—

“*Tu regere imperio populos, Romane, memento ;
Hæ tibi erunt artes, pacisque imponere morem,
Parcere subjectis et debellare superbos.*”

“Remember thou, O Roman, that 'tis thine
To rule the nations as of right divine ;
These be thy arts ; to settle steadfast peace,
To spare the meek and bid the proud ones cease.”

—*Æn. vi. 851-3.*

The imperial character continues throughout impressed upon the

¹ The name does not appear in Litta's *Famiglie* nor in the pedigree given by Fraticelli and many other biographers. It is given, however, by Passerini (*Della fam. di Dante*, p. 63 in *Bartoli*), and is accepted by A. v. Reumont in *D. Gesell. ii. 339*. The latter states that she was married to one of the house of Pantaleoni, and that her sons were living in 1361, but does not give his authorities.

poem. God Himself is the great Imperator (*H. i. 124*; *Par. xii. 40, xxv. 41*). The Apostles are the Barons of His Court (*Par. xxiv. 115, xxv. 17*), the Saints in general are His Counts (*Par. xxv. 42*). The greatest criminals in hell, those who have sinned most against the Divine purpose and the obligations of human loyalty, are Brutus, Cassius, and Iscariot. The apocalyptic vision of *Purg. xxxiii.* sets forth, beneath its veil of symbolism, the relations, true or distorted, of the Empire and the Church. The miseries of Italy are traced to the neglect or degeneracy of the Emperors and Popes who have been unfaithful to their calling (*Purg. vi. 97-127*; *Par. xxvii. 19-63*). Its restoration to peace and unity is found only in the hope of the true *Dux*, who shall at last realise the ideal (*Purg. xxxiii. 43, n.*). The speech of Justinian (*Par. vi. 1-99*) sketches the progress of the elect people of God,—from Dante's standpoint, not Israel but the Romans,—to their high position as the instruments of His providence. Even the problems of physical science gain another character when they are thought of as symbols of the true polity (*Par. ii. 49, n.*). The grief that eats deepest into the poet's soul is that the contending Guelphs and Ghibellines, by whose discord Italy was torn asunder, were alike contented with a half-truth which they thus turned into a falsehood (*Par. vi. 100-111*). He seeks throughout to establish his theory of the two independent co-ordinate powers by which, if they would but understand their right relations to each other, mankind might be led at once to the earthly Paradise of righteousness and peace, *Imperium et Libertas*, and to the heavenly Paradise of the Church militant and at last triumphant (*Mon. iii.*)

It is not difficult with these facts before us to assign to each of Dante's prose works its right relations to the *Magnum opus* of the *Commedia*. The *De Vulgari Eloquentia* is obviously but a half-finished sketch (it was to have been in at least four books (*V. E. ii. 4*) and there are only two) of the preliminary studies into the nature, office, and history, first of language in general, then of Italian in particular, then of the several modes of rhythmic speech, which led him to his decision as to the outward form of the *Commedia*. The *Vita Nuova* traces the genesis and growth of the Beatrice idea which, in its transfigured and completed form, pervades the great poem from its beginning to its end. The *De Monarchia* represents in like manner the imperial idea which is

never absent from it. The portion which the *Convito* occupies is somewhat more anomalous and more difficult to fix with precision. Parts of it were clearly written after his exile from Florence (B. i. 3), probably in the earlier years of that exile,¹ but parts, in the judgment of some of the most expert of Dante scholars (Witte, Scartazzini), were written at an earlier date.² Its whole tone, practically substituting, as it does, the "*donna gentile*" of philosophy, as "the daughter of the great Emperor of the Universe" (*Conv.* ii. 16), for Beatrice, as the representative of the higher and more heavenly wisdom of a true theology, points to the state of mind which preceded the conversion with which the poem opens and which I have assigned to his spiritual experience in the year of Jubilee (vol. i. p. lxvi.). In the slow, wearied, baffled attempts to scale the Delectable Mountain, on which he saw a far-off "rose of dawn," we may, without unduly allegorising, rightly see the attempt which the *Convito* records (B. ii.) to gain completeness for himself and his country with no other aid than that of his unassisted reason. In the deliberate withdrawal in the *Commedia* of statements physical, ethical, philosophical, which he had made in the *Convito*,³ we may trace something like the repentance and shame which finds more definite utterance in *Purg.* xxx., xxxi., and which gives to portions of the *Commedia* at least a partial resemblance to the *Retractationes* of Augustine, or to Cardinal Newman's recantations, after his conversion to Rome, of the hard things which he had written against her in the days of his earlier Anglicanism.

And the *Convito* also, we must remember, is an unfinished work. Its plan included fourteen books, and we have but four, and there

¹ The *quasi mendicando* seems to me to imply this. In later years the patronage of Moroello di Malaspina, Can Grande, and Guido da Polenta of Ravenna must have raised him above actual beggary. He had his sons with him at Lucca, and his daughter Beatrice at Ravenna (vol. i. p. cxiii.).

² The passage in *Conv.* i. 8 which speaks of the *V. E.* as still in contemplation is, I think, sufficiently explained on the assumption that the latter book was still in its unfinished state and had not been published.

³ I note a few of the more prominent instances: (1.) *Conv.* i. 1 represents knowledge as the supreme perfection of man's nature; *Par.* xxiii. finds that perfection in the vision of God. (2.) So in *Conv.* i. 1 knowledge is the "bread of angels," in *Par.* ii. 11 God Himself is that bread. (3.) In *Conv.* ii. 5 the forces that move the spheres are said to be popularly (by *la volgare gente*) known as angels. In the *Paradiso* we note no such half-contemptuous reserve. (4.) In *Conv.* ii. 16 the "*donna gentile*" is identified with Philosophy, as the daughter of the Emperor of the Universe, and her demonstrations are man's highest blessedness. In *Purg.* xxxi. 59 the "*donna gentile*" thus allegorised is a "*pargoletta*," his love for whom Dante confesses with shame, and the highest truths that man knows are those which he receives undemonstrated but by faith (*Par.* ii. 40-46, xxiv. 91-96).

is not the slightest shadow of an indication that he ever wrote more. That fact alone seems to me eminently suggestive. When he began it, he obviously contemplated it as a great encyclopædic work, embodying, in a form which would reach the average Italian reader, all the stores of knowledge which he had accumulated during many years of study, and win for the writer the greatest measure of friendship and applause. There must have been some weighty reason for the abandonment of so cherished a purpose begun before his exile and continued after it. And the reason which I am led to assign seems to me at once probable and sufficient. He began to feel that he was working in the two books, the *Convito* and the *Commedia*, on different lines leading to opposite conclusions. The two tasks were incompatible, and he had to make his choice between them. And so he abandoned what had seemed to promise the immediate reward of a widespread popularity, for the lonely task in which he was content to labour, with only a side glance at a possible gleam of fame in the closing years of life (*Par.* xxv. 1-9), in the consciousness, first, that the work was its own exceeding great reward, and then that he was speaking to far-off generations to whom the time in which he lived would seem as part of ancient history (*Par.* xvii. 118-120). To that work he now consecrated all his time and thought, all the result of study and observation, and so that and the *Vita Nuova* are the only books which have come down to us in their completeness, while the *Convito*, the *De Monarchiâ*, the *De Vulgari Eloquentiâ* were never, the *Convito* least of all, brought to the goal at which he aimed when starting.

It follows from what has been said that there are two facts of which the interpreter of the *Commedia* must take special note if he would not fall into the Scylla of fantastic hypothesis, or the Charybdis of a shallow literalism. He must remember that there is always likely to be more than one allegorical meaning lying beneath the veil of the letter, and that to limit his attention to one only is often to present but half the truth. The poem is, in fact, like "shot" silk, and presents different aspects according to the point of view from which men look on it, as the colours interpenetrate each other. A man like Ozanam sees only the gold of Catholic theology; a man like Rossetti sees only the purple of a Ghibelline imperialism. The student who varies his point of view learns that both are there, and that, blending with them,

there are also threads of personal feeling, or Aristotelian ethics, or reminiscences of nature, brought in simply because of the joy it gave the poet's heart to remember and reproduce them.

And then, with this, there is the fact which commentators often forget, that the "sacred poem" grew slowly, through not less than eighteen or twenty years, and that during that period the poet's mind was subject to the conditions of growth and change. The *Purgatorio* was not written in the same temper or with the same thoughts as the *Inferno*. The *Paradiso* reflects the wide knowledge and the workings of the poet's mind when it had attained a fuller ripeness than in either of the two. To forget this is much as if one should interpret Isaiah or Jeremiah or St. Paul without taking into account the influence which the incidents of their own lives, and the events of contemporary history, had upon their thoughts. In some cases, it is true, there are indications in the earlier parts of the *Commedia* of touches added at a later period. Foscolo was right, I believe, in maintaining (*Disc. xxv.-xxxiv.*, it is almost the one contribution to the study of Dante in the celebrated *Discorso sul Testo* of much value) that the poem was never, in any real sense of the word, published during the poet's lifetime, that he kept his MS. by him, sending copies of portions of it from time to time to friends like Ugucione della Faggiuola, Moroello Malaspina, Can Grande, and Joannes de Virgilio, and from time to time retouched and revised it. Those indications also the interpreter must keep in view if he would interpret rightly. Bearing these points in mind I proceed to a brief examination of each portion of the poem.

IV.

HELL.

THE story of the recovery of the first seven cantos of the *Inferno* of which Boccaccio tells us (vol. i. p. lxxxvi.), leads to the conclusion that they were written at Florence before Dante left, and left it for ever, on his embassy to Rome. But if so, the Greyhound

prophecy (*H.* i 100-111), whether we refer it to Can Grande or Ugueccione della Faggiuola or Henry VII., and Ciacco's prediction of the strife of parties (*C.* vi. 64-75), must have been added at a later period after his exile. The forecast of Farinata implies at least a date not earlier than 1304 (*H.* x. 79-82). That of Brunetto Latini points to a like conclusion, perhaps to a somewhat later date, when the poet saw a transient gleam of hope that his banishment might not be irrevocable, that both the contending parties of his city might court his alliance, *i.e.*, before the expedition of Henry VII. had roused the Guelphs of Florence to an enmity more irritated and more persistent than ever, and therefore fixes 1309, or at the latest, 1310, as a *terminus ad quem* (*H.* xv. 70-72). That of Nicolas III. indicates a date subsequent to the election of Clement V., 1305. The reference to Cahors in *C.* xi. 50 may possibly point to the election of John XXII., who was of that city, in 1316. On the whole, however, making allowance for these after-touches, the Ilarian letter, even if we look on it as apocryphal (*vol.* i. p. lxxxvii.), is fair evidence that the *Inferno* had been substantially completed before the year 1309, and I shall assume therefore that it embraces the first seven or eight years of the fourteenth century, the period in Dante's life between his thirty-fifth and his forty-fourth year.

The first of those years I have connected with the definite crisis in the poet's life, which we may rightly speak of as his conversion, and which is recorded in the opening vision of *C.* i. The change was a very real one. He passed from darkness to light, from despair to hope, from bondage to, at least, the foretaste of freedom. But it was with him, as with others, the beginning of the New Life, not the end. The transformation of character was not complete, and the "old Adam" in him (*Purg.* ix. 10) was still strong in other forms than that which made him heavy to sleep, in the burning indignation, the fiery "hate of hate" and "scorn of scorn," which were even kindled to a greater intensity than before by what came to him as the new discovery of the exceeding sinfulness of sin, its hateful self-assertion, its loathsome foulness. Some lines which Cardinal Newman wrote many years ago in the *Lyra Apostolica*, seem to me the best explanation of much that startles and offends us as we read the *Inferno*. It was as if a voice had sounded in his ears—

"And would'st thou reach, rash scholar mine,
 Love's high unruffled state?
 Awake! thy easy dreams resign,
 First learn thee how to hate."

And Dante, it must be admitted, did learn that lesson and bettered the instruction.

Nor can it be denied that there is a personal element of bitterness mingling with that hatred of evil as such. The wounds of that spirit, so *trasmutabile per tutte guise* (*Par.* v. 99), sensitive to the last point of sensitiveness, and not as yet "*ben tetragono ai colpi di ventura* (*Par.* xvii. 24), winced at the slightest touch. He looked on his enemies as the enemies of God, and looked on them therefore as the writers of *Pss.* lxix. and cix. looked on theirs. If, in some cases, as in those of Francesca (*H.* v. 73), and Brunetto (*H.* xv. 22), he felt a natural pity for a doom which yet from his standpoint appeared to him inevitable, and therefore righteous, there are others, *e.g.*, as those of Filippo Argenti (*H.* viii. 61), in which he rejoices, with a savage joy which reminds us of Tertullian (*De Spect.* c. 30) and Milton (*Reform. in England, ad fin.*), at the working out of the law of retribution, and in seeing men reap the harvest of which they themselves had sown the evil seed. He feels, it is true, at times, even beyond the special instances just named, the touch of human compassion, but he stamps it out as inconsistent with reverence for the Divine Righteousness (*H.* xx. 28). More than once even, as if he wished to set an example of the casuistry which taught that "no faith is to be kept with heretics," he represents himself as speaking words "that palter in a double sense" (*H.* xxxiii. 117, 150 *n.*), or yielding to the impulse which led him to add a fresh pain to the tortures of the damned (*H.* xxxii. 104). All this startles and shocks us, and more than anything else has given "occasion to blaspheme" to critics of the Voltaire and Landor and Leigh Hunt type. One would be sorry if it did not so. The only *apologia* of which the facts admit, is that here, in this stage of his growth, the man was not before or above his age. He judged as others judged, and spoke as others spoke. There was scarcely a Council in which the word *Damnamus* had not been uttered, in the white heat of fanaticism, or the drowsy acquiescence of assent, on the past and future of heretics. Names were struck out of

diptychs as though the souls for which they stood were past praying for. There was scarcely a monastery which had not its tale of oppressors or evil-doers who had been seen in torments.

I may add to that general defence one or two more personal considerations. (1.) It is not true that Dante places himself in the seat of judgment only or chiefly for the sake of delighting himself with the thought that his personal or political enemies are in Hell, or holding them up to everlasting shame, as worthy of it. The conditions of his poem forbade his placing any one among the lost (except by the poetic licence of a prophecy *ex eventu*, or of the idea that the souls may be in Hell while the body still lives and moves on earth, tenanted by a demon) who was living in the spring of 1300, and it was not till after that date that the political conflicts of his life began, and in those instances, *e.g.*, in Boniface VIII. (*H.* xix. 77), Clement V. (*H.* xix. 83), Branca d'Oria (*H.* xxxiii. 137), and Alberigo de' Manfredi (*H.* xxxiii. 118), there was enough evil, apart from any personal antagonism, to account for the condemnation (*ibid.*) An apparent parallel to these instances is found, we may remember, in the memorable scene in Southey's *Vision of Judgment*, in which, in the days of his rampant toryism, he puts Wilkes in Hell and George III. among the saints in Paradise. Whether the thing was more pardonable in Southey, because with him it was only a piece of poetic machinery, his own creed being that of a Universalist, while Dante believed, with the full intensity of faith, that persistent evil, without even the germ or beginning of repentance on earth, must in very deed work out an everlasting retribution, as the natural consequence of its own abused freedom, I leave others to discuss. All the same I admit frankly that Dante in this matter, whatever plea one may put in on his behalf as a man or as a poet, presents a warning and not an example. We learn how perilous it is, even to the supremest intellect, and the most righteous indignation that persuades itself that it does well to be angry, to dwell over much, in the temper of a judgment without mercy, on the mysteries of evil and its punishment, how even they may catch, in some measure, the infection of the evils they condemn. And, if I mistake not, Dante himself intimates in no obscure terms his consciousness of not having altogether escaped that peril. The chief element in his joy when he issues forth from the dark world which he had traversed is that he

can once more "look upon the stars," and those stars, as the first canto of the *Purgatorio* indicates, are not merely the orbs visible to sense in the firmament of Heaven, but the symbols of the four noblest virtues of heathen ethics. To those who read, as Dante wishes us to read, the inner allegory beneath the veil of the letter, there can scarcely, I think, be a question that he meant us to learn the lesson that to dwell too much on evil is to lose the power of contemplating good; that to know vice in its hideousness, even if it be necessary, as he assumes that it was necessary for him and might be for others (*H.* i. 112-120; *Purg.* xxx. 136-138), is not sufficient, that contact with that evil, even when we condemn it, brings with it a contamination of its own from which the soul needs to be cleansed. Before he can begin the ascent of the Mountain of Purification, the hands of Virgil have to wash off the stains which the murky smoke of Hell has left upon his face, that is, upon his inmost soul, and have marred for a time the clear vision of the Truth (*Purg.* i. 124-129).

As I have said, the years within which one may legitimately place the composition of the *Inferno*, 1300-1308, formed a transition stage in the trilogy of Dante's life. The *Cantique* itself bears witness that it was so. It bears the stamp of the same studies as the *Convito*. Its ethics are those of Aristotle, as Dante might have learnt them from Averrhoes, rather than of Aquinas. He quotes Boethius as his guide (*H.* v. 123; *Conv.* ii. 13). Even after what I have called his conversion, he falls back upon the classical imagery of Tartarus, the city of Dis and the Elysian fields, and Minos, and Charon, and Cerberus, and the Furies, and Acheron, and Lethe, and Geryon, and the Centaurs, rather than on those which Christian mythology had inherited from the Gospel of Nicodemus. He is an ethical teacher primarily, and his character as a theologian is as yet imperfectly developed. If, even in writing the *V. E.*, and while the *Vita Nuova* was his only completed work, he had claimed for himself the title of the "poet of righteousness," leaving that of the "poet of love" to his friend, Cino da Pistoia (*V. E.* ii. 2)—not, perhaps, without a tacit reference to the great work which, if he had not already begun it, he at least had in very definite contemplation,—much more was that thought dominant in him now. And the righteousness of which he looked on himself as the representative was, as it too often is in the first fiery glow of conversion at all

times, and still was more likely to be in that fierce, cruel world of the thirteenth century, a righteousness but little tempered with compassion. He believed himself called to the office which he assumed. He was for a time one of the powers that be in God's government of the world, and he would not bear the sword in vain, nor handle the word of the Lord deceitfully. I do not believe, as I have said, that he was consciously influenced by personal antagonism or antipathy, but it was scarcely in human nature to escape their unconscious influence altogether.

In one point I note, on comparing the *Convito* and the *Inferno*, what seems to me to indicate the passing away of old things, the beginning of the life in which all things were to become new. When he wrote the former (*Conv.* iii. 14) he had cherished the hope of a heavenly Athens in which Stoics, Epicureans, Platonists, Peripatetics should meet on the common ground of their devotion to philosophy, a dream almost like that of the later renaissance, of which Marsilio Ficino was the representative. In the latter, there is in that catalogue of the great master minds who had been the chief objects of his reverence (*H.* iv. 130), something like a solemn farewell to those studies of the past. His "wise guide leads him by another way," and he leaves them, with a pathos suggestively autobiographical, as those who could not help him to a higher knowledge than that to which they had themselves attained, with whom, if he had not found a truer guidance and a more excellent way, he must have remained for ever in the region of unsatisfied desires. They are left, for he thinks of them with kindlier feelings than Augustine did when he, after his conversion, looked back on his earlier studies (*Conf.* vii. 20), as in the Elysian fields,

"On open ground, high, full of light and clear" (*H.* iv. 116),

but they could not lead him to the Paradise of God. He perhaps felt, as Augustine did, that the knowledge thus gained was of the kind that puffs up, and so makes its possessor incapable of a true union with God, and a true communion with his fellows. The "*donna gentile*" of philosophy is no longer the mistress of his soul. He returns to his first love, and Beatrice, in her new transfigured character as the Theology which is one with Divine Wisdom, resumes her absolute, undisputed sway over his affections.

Some conclusions on minor matters follow from the dates thus

assigned to the beginning and end of the *Inferno*. We are able, on the natural assumption that vivid local descriptions imply personal local knowledge, to say, with scarcely a shadow of a doubt, that before 1308 he had visited Bologna (*H.* xviii. 51 n.), Padua (*H.* xv. 6), Mantua (*H.* xx. 93), Venice (*H.* xxi. 7), the Lago di Garda (*H.* xx. 64-78), Rome (*H.* xviii. 29), Pola (*H.* ix. 113), Arles (*H.* ix. 112), Cologne (*H.* xxiii. 63), Bruges and Wissant (*H.* xv. 4), and probably also Paris, London (*H.* xii. 120), and Oxford. For further details on this point I may refer to the *Study* on "Dante as an Observer and Traveller."

We can scarcely, however, pass from the *Inferno* without inquiring how far Dante was indebted to those who had preceded him in recording their visions of the Unseen World. Primarily, as we have seen, the Sixth Book of the *Aeneid* supplied materials which he found ready to his hand, and of which he largely availed himself. It is possible, though not probable, that he may have had access, through translations or otherwise, to the vision of Hades in the *Odyssey* (B. xi.), or to the mythical representations of the unseen in the *Gorgias*, the *Phædo*, the *Republic* of Plato. That such visions should be prominent in Christian literature was, of course, to be expected, and the lists of the writings in which Dante may have come in contact with them is sufficiently long. The acts of Perpetua and Felicitas, quoted by Tertullian (*de An.* c. 35); and Augustine (*de An. Orig.* i. 10, iv. 18; *Serm.* 280, 283, 294), abound in such revelations of the Unseen World. The Life of Gregory the Great, by Paulus Diaconus, brought to his knowledge the story of Trajan as it appears in *Purg.* x. 73-93, and the *Dialogues* (iv. 36) of the same Father gave a picture of the punishment of the lost. Labitte in his *La Divine Comédie avant Dante* (*Rev. d. Deux Mondes*, 4th ser., vol. xxxi.) gives a long list of visions more or less analogous from the sixth century, of which the most memorable are those of Drithelm, reported by Bede (*H. E.* v. 12) in the seventh century, of Wettin of Reichenau (near Constance), in 824 (given in the Benedictine *Acta Sanctorum*, v. p. 288), of Prudentius, Bishop of Troyes, in 839 (Hincmar, *Opp.*, 1645, ii. p. 805), of Charles the Bald (875), of Charles the Fat (888), of St. Brandan in the eleventh century (Wright, *Life of St. B.*), and that known as St. Patrick's Purgatory in the twelfth (the narrator being a monk named Owen), which obtained a widespread popularity

throughout Europe (Wright's *St. Patrick's Purgatory*), that of the descent of St. Paul into Hell (given in full by Ozan), of Walkelin (*Order. Vit.*, viii. 17), and lastly, that of the boy Alberic of Monte Cassino in the early part of the twelfth century. Nearer to Dante's time are those of Matilda (Mechthild), of Helfta, near Eisleben, in a book bearing the title of the *Effluent Light of the Godhead* (1250-1270), or of another Matilda, Abbess of Hackeborn, of the same convent (d. 1292), who wrote a book on *Spiritual Graces* (Boehmer in *D. Gesell.*, iii. pp. 101-178; Lubin, pp. 325-352). Lastly, Dante's own master, Brunetto Latini, in his *Tesoretto* begins, as Dante does, with describing how he was lost in a forest, and then was led on by Ptolemy the astronomer to see a vision of the Unseen World and the punishments of evil-doers (Delins in *D. Gesell.*, iv. p. 23).

Readers of the books, or parts of books, or treatises to which I have referred (those of St. Brandan, St. Patrick, Walkelin, Alberic, are to be found in the notes to Longfellow's *Dante*), will find that in each case there are sufficiently striking parallelisms with the *Commedia* to render the hypothesis that Dante was acquainted with this or that vision more or less tenable, even perhaps to make it seem to the writer who maintains the hypothesis absolutely invulnerable. I cannot say that I estimate the amount of Dante's indebtedness to any one of them at any large measure. Parallelisms almost as striking are to be found in writings that were altogether outside the horizon of his studies, in the Edda, in the Anglo-Saxon poem of the Phoenix (both given by Longfellow), even in the Mahabharata and the Koran (quoted by Labitte). It is, of course, almost beyond a doubt that Dante must have read the *Tesoretto*. It is probable, as I have suggested in vol. i. p. lxxv., that he may have seen the MS. of Alberic's vision at Monte Cassino. The *Tophet and Eden* of the Jewish poet, Immanuel of Rome, may have been known to him when he was at Rome (vol. i. p. lxxvi.). But as the number of the supposed *origines* indicates, visions of this kind were floating in the air throughout the whole of mediæval Europe from the sixth century onwards. They were embodied in the architecture of French cathedrals which Dante may, or may not, have seen, in the Triumph of Christ in the frescoes of the crypt of that of Auxerre, in the west rose-window of that of Chartres, in the west front of that of Autun, in the porch of Conques, in Notre Dame at Paris.

Labitte (*ut supra*, p. 736) states, as the result of his researches, that the architecture of France alone supplies not less than fifty illustrations of the *Commedia* by way of anticipation. The mysteries and miracle-plays which were common throughout Europe naturally tended, especially those that dealt with the Descent into Hell, to representations of a like nature (Warton, *H. E. P.* ii. pp. 19, 20). The performance on the Ponte alla Carraia, which had so disastrous an issue in May 1304, with its scenes of Hell and its figures of demons and damned souls, though it was new at Florence (*Vill.* viii. 70), was probably a reproduction of what had been seen elsewhere, and was obviously exhibited in entire independence of Dante's work in the *Commedia* (vol. i. p. lxxxii.)

On the whole, therefore, I am led to the conclusion that there is no ground for imputing anything like deliberate plagiarism to Dante in this matter, or even for assuming, to any considerable extent, a conscious reproduction. His position is simply that of one who, like all great poets, is the heir of the ages that have preceded him. The supreme artificer uses all materials that he finds ready to hand. Whatever was grotesque, horrible, or foul in the mediæval conceptions of the Unseen World, no less than what was pure, bright, transcendent in its beauty, was likely to find its way into his treasure-house of things new and old, and to be used by him in the spirit of his own, and not of a later, generation.

PART II.



V.

PURGATORY.

I BEGIN, as before, with the time-limits within which we may assume—asuming also, as is at least probable, that the author finished one part before he began another—that the second Cantique of the great work was written. This would lead us to start with 1309, about the time when the Narian letter tells us that Dante, then on his way to some country beyond the Alps, dedicated the *Inferno* to Ugucione della Faggiuola, and left the MS. with the monk of Santa Croce del Corvo (vol. i. p. lxxxvii.) The latest notes of time in the *Purgatorio* are the references (1) to the persecution of the Templars by Philip the Fair (*Purg.* xx. 91-93), which began in 1312; (2) to the transfer of the Papal Court from Rome to Avignon (*Purg.* xxxii. 160) in 1312; (3) possibly to Henry VII., as the destined instrument of Providence in the restoration of the true Empire, and therefore at least to the beginning of his Italian expedition in the autumn of 1311 (*Purg.* xxxiii. 43). Assuming C. vi. 100-102 to be a prophecy *ex eventu*, we may, without risk of error, connect the earlier Cantos of this second part of the *Commedia* with a date subsequent to the death of the Emperor Albert in 1308. In C. viii. 121-139 we have in like manner a distinct reference to the hospitality which the poet received at the hands of Moroello Malaspina in 1307-9. I do not find in the *Purgatorio*, as I find in the *Paradiso*, any direct reference to the ultimate failure of Henry's expedition, or to the change of policy on the part of Clement V., which, from Dante's point of view, contributed to that failure (*Par.* xvii. 82, xxx. 136), and therefore I infer that it was finished when the poet's mind

was still flushed with bright hopes for himself and for Italy, when he persuaded himself, as in his Letter to the Princes and Cities of Italy (vol. i. p. civ.), that all but a worthless few would receive the new Emperor as the anointed of the Lord. The date of that letter is fixed by experts in the winter of 1310-11; the date of Henry's death was August 21, 1313. I am led accordingly to the conclusion that the *Purgatorio* was the most rapidly written of all the three Cantiques, and that the period of its composition embraces the years 1308-12, in which Dante was watching with hope the election of Henry VII. to the Imperial throne, and the preparations for his Italian expedition. The fulness of hope with which the *Purgatorio* ends forbids the thought that he had reached the point when the bitterness of hope deferred pierced his soul. On the other hand, the allusion to the "crown and mitre" in *Purg.* xxvii. 142 makes it probable that that Canto was written after the Emperor's coronation in the Church of St. John Lateran on June 29, 1312. There is, I think, much in the structure and tone of the *Purgatorio* which falls in with this hypothesis. There are fewer oscillations of spirit in it than in the *Inferno*. There is none of the grim humour which startles and almost offends us in the demon scenes of the Malebolge. We breathe throughout a purer and clearer air, and the poet's delight in all beauties of nature and of art, in the glories of the dawn and sunset and the starry sky, in memories of sweet music, in the creations of the painter and the sculptor, is full and overflowing. It may well be that it was his recollection of that time of hope for himself, for Italy, and for mankind which led Dante afterwards to say of himself that there was no child of the Church Militant that had wider and brighter hopes than he had (*Par.* xxv. 52). The vision of Sordello and the Valley of the Kings (*Purg.* vi., vii.) receives on this hypothesis, as it receives on no other, an explanation which brings out its full significance. The poet has heard of the Emperor Albert's death; he has entered, probably, on the negotiations which ended in the election of Henry VII. as his successor (vol. i. p. xcvi.) He will tell that successor of the claims which Italy has on him, and warn him of the peril of neglecting them. The factions of Verona, and Orvieto, and Florence; the desolation of Rome, the widowed city, mourning over the absence of her lord; the state of the country

as a whole, drifting in the storm, like a ship without a pilot—all these are brought by him before the eyes of the new Emperor, and he is told, above all things, not to follow in the footsteps of Rodolph and Albert in leaving Italy to itself. Significant hints are thrown out, whether for Henry of Luxemburg or another, as to the alliances which it will be wise for him to form. He is warned once and again against the treacherous, subtle, and unscrupulous greed of gain which he would find in Philip the Fair (*Purg.* vii. 109, xxxii. 155). He is advised to seek the alliance of Edward II. of England (*Purg.* vii. 132),¹ the grandson of a saintly father, rather than to lean on the broken reed of France. Dante writes of the politics of Europe as his favourite prophet, Jeremiah (*H.* i. 32, *n.*), had done of the politics of Judah, Babylon, Assyria, and Egypt. Sordello—loved and admired on other grounds as a poet—rises into a new prominence, because he too had passed his judgment on the kings and princes of Europe with a bold and unshrinking severity (*Purg.* vi. 58, *n.*) The reference to the promptness of Caesar's action (*Purg.* xviii. 101) gains a fresh suggestiveness, when we think of it as a hint to the newly elected Emperor that it will be well for him too to avoid procrastination, and not to let "I dare not" wait upon "I would."

The traces of the poet's studies in the *Purgatorio* confirm the conclusion to which we have been led by his notices of contemporary history. Aristotle and Boethius fall into the background, and the teaching of the Church is brought into a new prominence. That teaching is, however, such as would be found in the Missal and other office-books of the Church, and in popular manuals of devotion, rather than that of the great scholastic theologians. As yet there are few, if any, traces that Dante had studied Aquinas or Bernard, or Hugo, or Richard of St. Victor. The classification of sins is no longer that of the *Nicomachean Ethics* as interpreted by Averroes, as in *H.* xi. 80-84, *n.*, and the seven *Peccata* from which the pilgrim is to be cleansed are those which were the basis, as in Chaucer's *Person's Tale*, of the penitential discipline of the Church (*Purg.* ix. 112). The Beatitudes from the Sermon on the Mount which greet the pilgrim at each successive stage of his purification from those sins, the

¹ Edward I. died in July 1307. The term "branches" seems purposely chosen to take in his successor, whose degeneracy was not as yet manifested to the world.

numerous examples from the history of the Old and New Testaments, David and Michal, and Stephen, and the Maccabees, and the woman of Samaria, and the Blessed Virgin in all her manifold graces, the paraphrase of the Lord's Prayer in *Purg.* xi. 1-21, all speak of the closer study of the Vulgate which marked this period, as contrasted with that of the *Inferno* and the *Convito*. He caught eagerly, as I have shown when speaking of Dante as an interpreter of Scripture, at the fourfold method of exegesis, which was so congenial to his subtle and imaginative intellect. The frequent quotations from, or allusions to, the hymns of the Latin Church show that the Missal and other offices of the Church were his constant companions, that the psalms and hymns and anthems of the season, of which we have seen reason to think as the period of the great crisis of his life, were especially dear to him.¹ And not the words only of those psalms and hymns. More than ever—more even than in the days when his own Canzoni and other poems were set to music by Casella (*Purg.* ii. 91), the poet's soul was open to the sweet influences of harmony; and the solemn peal of the organs of Italian cathedrals (*Purg.* ix. 144), or the evening chimes of the Ave Maria of less conspicuous churches (*Purg.* viii. 1-6), at once woke in him tender reminiscences of the past, and reproduced themselves in the new grandeur and melody of his own resounding lines.

I have endeavoured in a paper in the *Contemporary Review* for September 1884 to indicate the value of the autobiographical element which is interwoven with the whole texture of the *Purgatorio*. The limits within which I must now confine myself do not allow of the same latitude of quotation which I was able to claim then, and, as the passages are now in the reader's hands, such a latitude is not needed; but I avail myself of this opportunity to reproduce from that article what seem to me its most salient points.

"It has seemed to me, as I have read the *Purgatorio*, that in it, far more than in the *Inferno* or the *Paradiso*, the man Dante Alighieri reveals himself to us in all the distinctness of his personality; that the poem is essentially autobiographical. It is something more than a polemic against the crimes of the Roman

¹ Compare *Purg.* ii. 46 n., v. 24, vii. 83, viii. 13 n., ix. 140, xvi. 19, xxi. 136, xxiii. 11, xxv. 121, xxviii. 80, xxix. 3, 51, xxx. 11, 19, 83, xxxi. 98, xxxiii. 1.

Curia or the factions of Florence; something more than the summing up of the creed of Mediæval Christendom, or the veiled symbolism of a new and mystic heresy destructive of that creed. In the *Inferno* he passes on stern and ruthless, condemning sins which were not his, hardly touched, except in the Francesca story, with the thought of the pity of it all. In the *Paradiso* he paints a blessedness to which he has not attained, on which he gazes as from a far-off distance, which he can but dimly apprehend. But in the *Purgatorio* he is with those who are not only of like passions with himself, but are passing through a like stage of moral and spiritual experience. The seer paints the process of the purification of his own soul from the seven deadly sins that had eaten into his life. We might almost speak of this section of his poem as the 'Confessions of Dante Alighieri.'

"We have scarcely entered on the threshold of the Cantique before this essentially self-scrutinising analysis meets us. At first, indeed, his soul, as if in the full delight of its escape from the darkness of the pit, exults in its recovered freedom, in its old joy, in itself a purifying joy, in light and the fresh breeze of dawn (*Purg.* i. 1-18). If we would understand the opening of the *Purgatorio*, we must go back to the Stygian waters of the nether world, wherein were plunged by a righteous Nemesis the souls of those who, in the sullenness of their discontent, had lost the capacity of entering into that joy (*H.* vii. 115-124). Of that sullen discontent Dante had not been guilty, even under the heavy burdens of poverty and exile, and therefore he had not lost the capacity for hope which was denied to those who dwelt in the dolorous city (*H.* iii. 9). And so, when he has left the region where 'silent is the sun' (*H.* i. 60), and can once more 'look upon the stars' (*H.* xxxiv. 139), his spirit exults in its liberation (*Purg.* i. 1-6). Nowhere in the whole poem, one might almost say in all poetry, is the brightness of that dawn, at once of the earthly and the heavenly morning, more beautifully painted (*Purg.* i. 13-20); or once again in that marvellous picture of the trembling of the illumined sea (*Purg.* i. 115-117), of which it is hard to say whether it excels most in beauty or in truth.

"But not the less in the midst of this natural joy is there the thought present to the poet's mind that he is entering on a solemn work; that it is he himself, his own soul, that needs the cleansing

which he is about to describe. Bearing that thought in mind, we shall be able to follow his course through the seven circles of the Mount of Purification with a clearer insight, to note what were the sins which weighed most heavily on his conscience, what were the healing remedies which he had found most effective against them. I start with the words in which Virgil, as the poet's guide, sets forth to Cato, who, as the representative of the natural virtues of which the four stars that cast their light upon his face are symbols, is the guardian of the entrance to Purgatory, the errand on which they had come (*Purg.* i. 58-72).

"As we advance we note a more distinct confession. Dante is conscious of the over-sensitiveness which makes him keenly alive to men's looks of wonder or their words of scorn, as the souls in the vestibule of Purgatory gazed on him, marvelling that his form, unlike theirs, casts a shadow (*Purg.* v. 7-21). A little farther on and we find a like weakness, of which that sensitiveness was the natural outcome. He is in the circle of souls whose pride of life is chastened by the bowed-down prostration of an enforced lowliness, which he describes fully (*Purg.* x. 130-140). One of these, Omberto of Santafore, tells him his name and his sin, how that he had been so lifted up by his pride of birth that he scorned all his fellow-men, and Dante, as he listens, as if conscience pricked him, bowed his head as if to hide his shame (*Purg.* xi. 61-73). In another of these he recognises the painter Oderisi of Gubbio, who, in like manner, confesses that he had so gloried in his heart as to speak contemptuously of all his rivals. And then he moralises on the transitoriness of human fame in words which touched at once the poet himself, and two at least of his dearest friends, Giotto and Guido Cavalcanti. The one had supplanted Cimabue in popular esteem; the other had taken the place once occupied by Guido Guinicelli. It might, perchance, be that one then living (possibly Dante means himself) should surpass them both. All fame was transitory, and the conscience of the seer makes answer that he had learnt a lesson that brought low his pride (*Purg.* xi. 79-119). He does not, however, indulge in indiscriminate self-accusation. He passes into the circle where souls are purified from the sin of envy by being for a time blinded. They had looked, as with an evil eye, on the good fortune of others, and this was their righteous chastisement. To

that fault Dante does not plead guilty, as he did in the case of pride. From that special form of evil he can say with a good conscience that he had been almost, if not altogether, free (*Purg.* xiii. 133-138).

"But the supreme confession of unworthiness comes, as it was meet it should do, when the poet stands, after he has passed through the cleansing fire, face to face with his transfigured and glorified Beatrice. He sees her, at first, clothed in a green mantle, and with a snow-white olive-bordered veil; and though as yet he sees not her face, the intuitive consciousness of the presence of her who was at once beautiful and terrible in her purity filled him at first, as it had filled him in his boyhood (*V. N. c. 2*), with an overpowering awe, which made him look for help to the poet who had so far been his guide (*Purg. xxx. 43-48*). But Virgil was there no longer. Human guidance, the teaching of the wise, the traditions of a venerable past, these had done their work, and he finds himself face to face with her whom he had loved as a woman with an absorbing and passionate devotion, and who now met him on her chariot of glory as the embodied form of Heavenly Wisdom, the transfigured and glorified conscience of Humanity. He stood awe-stricken, and the bitter tears flowed fast and cleansed his cheeks, and then a voice came from her which thrilled the abysmal depths of personality. 'Dante,' it said—it is the one solitary passage in the whole poem in which the poet names himself:—

'Dante, weep not because thy Virgil's gone;
Weep not as yet; as yet weep thou no more;
For other sword-wounds must thy tears flow down.'

—*Purg. xxx. 55-57.*

He turns to look on her, and sees her 'queen-like in look and gesture, yet severe.' He hears her words of reproof and gazes on his own form imaged in the waters, and, as he can bear neither vision, stands with eyes cast down upon the grass, like a guilty child in the presence of its mother (*Purg. xxx. 64-81*). Tears cease to flow, and the poet felt as if his heart was frost-bound, as are the Apennines when the snow lies heavy on the trees. The healing came from the angelic ministers who accompanied Beatrice. They sang their anthem of *In Te, Domine, speravi*, and his soul knew once more the relief of tears (*Purg. xxx. 91-99*). But the

stern work of the illumined conscience which Beatrice represents has yet to be done, and she reproves her over-pitiful attendants (*Purg.* xxx. 103-108). She presses on him the remembrance of his early days, naming the very book, the *Vita Nuova*, which he had consecrated to his reverential love for her, and reminds him of all the promise and potency of good and all the actualities of evil which had characterised his youth (*Purg.* xxx. 115-145). This was terrible enough. It was, as it were, Dante's anticipation of the time when the books shall be opened, and the things done in the body shall be made manifest to Christ and to His angels. But this was not all. The voice of the Judge, which is also the voice of the Beloved—for Beatrice unites both characters—must say to the accused, as Nathan said to David, 'Thou art the man.' The sinner must confess his sin as David confessed it: 'Against thee only have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight.' Question after question is pressed home upon him, till at last there comes the confession which Beatrice sought for as the condition of forgiveness:—

'The things that present were
With their false pleasure led my steps aside,
Soon as thy face was hidden from me there.'

—*Purg.* xxxi. 1-36.

Confession brings, as ever, the sense of pardon and absolution, but the soul's wounds need the oil and the wine that heal, and reproof and warning are needed for the coming years, lest they should reproduce the failures of the past, till the poet stands once again like 'a little child, dumb from shame of heart' (*Purg.* xxxi. 64). The close of that wonderful scene which restores to the sinner his lost purity and peace will meet us at a later stage. We are dealing now, not with the full completion of the process of restoration, but with the confession which was its antecedent and condition. It may well be asked whether the whole range of literature presents anything more intensely autobiographical? We read it in its dramatic form, which half veils from us its marvellous reality; but we have to remember that it was Dante's pen that wrote it all; that it was the man, proud, reserved, reticent, craving for the praise of his fellows and sensitive to their censure, that thus laid bare the secrets of his soul. The reproofs of Beatrice are, as I have said, those of his own illumined and transfigured conscience.

The *Purgatorio* takes its place, in spite of all differences of form and character, side by side with the *Confessions* of Augustine. One who has entered into its meaning will at least have learnt one lesson. He will have felt the power of Dante's intense truthfulness. The theories which see in the *Commedia*, from first to last, the symbolic cypher of a crypto-heresy, the writings of a man in a mask, veiling a pantheistic license under the garb of a scholastic theology, will seem absolutely incredible.

"Starting from the point thus gained, we may venture, without undue boldness, to trace in the cleansing processes which he describes as seen on the Mount of Purification the record of what he had found purifying and healing in its influence upon his own soul.

"Of his joy in the serene beauties of light and sky I have already spoken as one of those influences. It is worth while to note how often he returns in the *Purgatorio* to descriptions of a like character, sometimes in their purely natural character, more often in connexion with the tender human memories which are associated with them. So, while he still stands by the sea on which he had seen the light trembling on the waters, he notes the change of hue that dawn brought with it (*Purg.* ii. 5-15). Light is the condition of the purifying process (*Purg.* vii. 43-45). A sense of peace comes over him as he rests in the fair valley which is painted with a jewelled beauty that reminds us of Fra Angelico (*Purg.* vii. 73-81). Eventide with its vesper chimes awakens a rush of tender memories of the friendships of the past (*Purg.* viii. 1-6). The slumber of the night that follows is succeeded by another dawn, and so 'day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge' (*Ps.* xix. 2), and he feels that that is the hour when the soul looks into the unseen world with clearer vision (*Purg.* ix. 1-18). The light of the visible sun becomes a parable of the Sun of Truth and Righteousness (*Purg.* xiii. 16-21).¹ It is a matter of self-reproach that men are so deaf to the witness of the 'beauteous orbs eterne' that illumine the firmament of heaven (*Purg.* xiv. 148-150). Sweet memories of spring breathe their balmy healing on his soul (*Purg.* xxiv. 145-150). The

¹ The thought belongs in itself to one of the most universal parables of Nature, but it may have come to Dante through the well-known *Hymn to the Sun* by S. Francis of Assisi (Sir J. Stephen's *Essays on Eccles. Biog.*, p. 94, ed. 1867).

supreme witness to the therapeutic power of Nature on the eye that has been purged and opened is found in the parting words with which Virgil leaves the disciple who no longer needs his guidance, and in the new abounding joy with which that disciple yields himself to its influence, all the more suggestive from the intermingling with that imagined ideal of what might be in the soul's future, of the memories which sprang from his own solitary walks in the pine-woods of Ravenna (*Purg.* xxvii. 124-142, xxviii. 1-21).

"But, side by side with this yielding of the soul, as with the openness of a renewed childhood, in the very spirit of Wordsworth, to the teaching of nature, the voices of the silent stars, the whisperings of the winds, the music of the waters, the beauty of the hills and woods, the *Purgatorio* describes other processes, each of them suggestive of an experience through which Dante himself had passed, and of an insight into the hygiene and therapeutics of the soul gained by that experience. One of these meets us on the very threshold. The Master and the Scholar, Virgil and Dante, have asked for guidance. How is the latter to qualify himself for the ascent of the Mount of Purification, which is untrodden ground to the former? And the answer comes from Cato, as the representative of natural ethics, symbolised in the four stars (justice, fortitude, temperance, prudence) that cast their light on his face, pointing to something beyond their reach. In obedience to that answer (*Purg.* i. 94-99), the pilgrim girds himself with the rush which was to be the symbol, not of the strength and vigour on which men look as conditions of success in their great enterprises—intellectual, moral, spiritual—but of the humility which ceases from self-assertion, and yields itself to the chastisements which God appoints for it, and is content with a low estate, and seeks not great things for itself. Whatever we may think of the tradition that Dante had at one time enrolled himself as a member of the Tertiary Order of St. Francis (vol. i. p. lv.), this passage at least indicates that he had grasped in its completeness the idea of that 'cord of lowliness' which was one of the outward badges of the Brotherhood of Francis of Assisi. The rush-girdle took the place of that which had been thrown to Geryon, as having proved itself of no power in conflict with the leopard, that was the symbol of sensual sin (*H.* xvi. 106-112)."

That other process of the cleansing of his face from the smoky grime of the *Inferno* is hardly less significant in its symbolism. Contact with evil, even with the righteous Nemesis that falls on evil, is, as I have already pointed out, not without its perils. The man catches something of the taint of the vices on which he looks. He is infected with the *bassa voglia*, which lingers as it listens to the revilings of the base (*H. xxx. 148, n.*) He becomes hard and relentless as he passes among those who have perished in their hatred. He looks on the sufferings of the lost, not only with awe and dread, but with a Tertullian-like ferocity of exultation. Before the work of purification can begin, before he can prepare himself to meet the gaze of the angel-warder of Purgatory, he must be cleansed from the blackness of the pit. The eye cannot see clearly the beauty, outward or spiritual, which is to work out its restoration to humanity and holiness until its memories of the abyss are made less keen and virulent. And when that process begins, and the pilgrim has at last arrived at the gates of Purgatory, the symbolism becomes yet richer and more suggestive. Dante had dreamt that he had been borne upward, as on eagle's wings, into a region terrible in its brightness (*Purg. ix. 31-33*). But the dream has its interpretation, and its message is, that he has at last reached the gates of Purgatory; and that the purifying process may begin. He has been transported thither in that ecstasy of his morning slumber by Lucia, at once the Syracusan saint in whose church at Florence he may have worshipped, to whom he may have turned in the simplicity of his youthful faith as prevailing to help him when blindness threatened to place him, as it placed Milton, in the list of the great poets who had suffered under a like privation—

"Tiresias and Phineus, prophets old,
Blind Thamyris and blind Mæonides;"

and one who was for him, in the after-thoughts of maturer life, when he had learnt to transfigure all his early memories, the symbol of heavenly illumination (*H. ii. 97, n.*) That diviner insight was needed for what was to follow. Sitting on the topmost of three steps of varied hue, he sees the angel of Purgatory with a face of transcendent brightness, and bearing in his hand a naked sword, dazzling in its brightness—the "sword of the

Spirit, which is the Word of God." The first of the steps is of white marble, which mirrors all his features. *There* is the self-knowledge which sees itself in the mirror of the Divine Word. The second of stone, nearly black, rough and coarse and cracked. *There* is the rough sternness of mortification, in all its contrast to the softness of the self-indulgence in which the natural man delights. The third is of fiery porphyry, crimson like blood. *There* is the glow of burning love, not without a latent hint of the supreme instance of that love in the blood that flowed from hands and feet and wounded side upon the cross.

These were the steps that had to be surmounted before the pilgrim could enter on his steep ascent, and then, passing these, he smites his breast, as did the Publican, and then the angelic warder, with the point of his sword, marks the seven P's upon his brow, and the gates are opened with the gold and silver keys of Absolution and of Counsel.

Yes, the seven P's of the seven *Peccata*, the mortal sins of the popular ethics of Mediæval Christendom, are all thus traced upon the poet's forehead; for in him, as in all of us, there were the possibilities, even the actualities, of all. He might be conscious, as we have seen in the instances of Pride and Envy, of one form of evil as more dominant in him than another, of its being, as we say, his "besetting" sin; but not the less did he need to pass through each successive stage in the great ascent, and to experience the working of all that was most potent to heal and deliver from the sin which was purged in each several stage of the ascent.

It is every way characteristic both of the man and of his time that so large a share in that healing work should be assigned to music, and that the music of the Church. He may possibly have studied—he certainly shared—the visions of the great English Franciscan thinker, Roger Bacon, between whose writings and his own there are so many points of parallelism¹ as to the regenerating and purifying power of sacred psalmody. He had known, as Hooker, Milton, J. H. Newman knew, how it could soothe the troubles and attune the discords of the soul; how, when married

¹ "*Mira enim musicæ super omnes scientias est et spectanda potestas. . . . Mores enim reformat, ebrietas sanat, infirmitates curat, sanitatem conservat, quietem somni inducit* If we did but know the inner secrets of the art, brutes would be tamed by its subtle power. "*Similiter et hominum animi in quemlibet gratiam devotionis raperentur, et in plenum cuiuslibet virtutis amorem excitarentur, et in omnem sanitatem et vigorem.*" (*Op. Tert. c. 73.*)

to immortal verse, it could give them wings, like those of Ezekiel's vision (*Ezek.* i. 9), that made them fit vehicles for the utterance of divinest mysteries. Shall we be wrong in thinking that here also we have in the *Purgatorio* an autobiographical element, reminiscences of hours when, in the Abbey of Florence, or the Franciscan church of Santa Croce, or his own "beloved St. John's" (*H.* xix. 7), or elsewhere, in cathedral or monastery, he had new thoughts of penitence and pardon, of high resolves and aspirations after holiness?

Let us examine some, at least, of these instances by way of an induction. He is still on the shore of the sea in the waters of which he had laved his face and had seen the angel's boat bearing more than a hundred souls, and they were all chanting as with one voice *In exitu Israel de Ægypto*. That was the fit opening hymn of this "pilgrim's progress." After the fashion of his time, Dante had read into it a deeper meaning than seemed to lie on the surface. It spoke to him of the deliverance of the Israel of God from another house of bondage than that of the literal Egypt. When he notes, as with special care, that they did not stop at these opening words, but went on to "all the psalm doth afterward unfold" (*Purg.* ii. 46-48), we feel that that mystical interpretation had guided his thoughts to its closing words, and that for him—the wanderer in a desert land, thirsting after righteousness—it bore its witness of the Power that could turn "the hard rock into a standing water, and the flint stone into a springing well." In what follows there is something yet more intensely personal. Among those newly arrived souls was that of Casella, whose meeting with his former friend in "the milder shades of Purgatory" Milton's sonnet has made familiar to us all. Time and death have not changed the old affection. After the vain embrace of the shadow of the one with the mortal body of the other, after the recognition which revives the memories of past days, the poet prays that his friend will yet put forth his power and skill in song to soothe him as of old (*Purg.* ii. 106-114). It is, I think, impossible not to recognise in this something more than the memory of the pleasant days of youthful friendship. There is the distinct recognition of the fact that the mysterious, religious, purifying power of music is not limited to that which we commonly call "sacred;" that a "song of love," such as *Canzone* xv., may touch

that which is most essentially spiritual in us, and may stir up thoughts that lie too deep for tears. This, however, stands as a solitary episode, the exception which proves the rule, and the rule was that it was not from minstrels or troubadours, Provençal or Italian, but from the singers and choristers of the Church that Dante had heard the melodies which chased away the evil phantasms of his soul. So, as he advances, he hears other souls sing their *Miserere* of penitence (*Purg.* v. 24). So, as the gates are unlocked with the gold and silver keys, sweet voices, mingled with organ-thunders, chant the *Te Deum* (*Purg.* ix. 139-145). But chiefest in its power, and therefore worthy of fuller reproduction, was the prayer which men learn in childhood at their mother's knees, and which retains its power to utter the soul's wants to extremest age (*Purg.* xi. 1-24). What follows is given, as before, more in the way of brief and suggestive hints. Each beatitude of the Sermon on the Mount becomes a separate anthem, greeting the pilgrim as he passes from one circle to another. And with these there mingle manifold utterances of the anthem character, the *Agnus Dei* (*Purg.* xvi. 19), the *Adhæsit pavimento* (*Purg.* xix. 73), the *Gloria in Excelsis* (*Purg.* xx. 136), the *Labia mea, Domine* (*Purg.* xxiii. 11), and the *Summus Deus Clementis* (*Purg.* xxv. 121), and the *Venite, benedicti Patris mei* (*Purg.* xxvii. 58). Finally, with that last music ringing in his ears, he passes through the wall of fire which cleanses him from what yet remained of the tendency to fleshly sin, and therefore parted him from the vision of the glorified Beatrice (*Purg.* xxvii. 49-60). And he enters on the earthly Paradise, where by night the stars are larger than their wont, and where, when the day dawns, he sees the stream, at once dark and crystal clear, and the fair lady, afterwards named as Matilda, in whom, amid all their hypotheses as to her historical identification, well-nigh all interpreters have seen the representative of active, as distinct from contemplative, holiness. Her hands are full of flowers, and her eyes are bright with the brightness of a benign and sympathising love. That he may understand what he sees, she bids him remember the psalm (*Ps.* xcii.), of which he gives but the keynote word, but of which at least one whole verse must have been present to his thoughts—

“ *Quia delectasti me, Domine, in factura Tua,
Et in operibus manuum Tuarum exultavi.* ”

Here was the supreme sanction for man's delight in the works of God, for the witness borne by all forms of visible beauty to that which is invisible and eternal. It is significant that she reveals, after she has told of the mystic rivers which the pilgrim still has to pass, the secret of this full capacity, and finds it in the anthem words of another psalm, "*Beati quorum tecta sunt peccata*" (*Ps. xxxii. 1*). Only those who have the peace of pardon are so far at leisure from themselves as to have the capacity for that enjoyment of the works of God (*Purg. xxiv. 3, xxviii. 80*). I pass over the vision that follows, as being more deliberately symbolic, and therefore showing rather the skill of the apocalyptic artist than the personality of the man, but the immediate prelude to the revelation of the glorified Beatrice as the impersonation of the Eternal Wisdom is again distinctly personal, as blending together the two influences of natural beauty and sacred song, of which I have already spoken. In that apocalypse, apparently from the lips of the Seer of Patmos, he hears a voice of power, "*Veni, Sponsa de Libano*," and with it, strangely blending, as is Dante's wont, scriptural and classical memories, Alleluias, and "*Benedictus es qui venis*," and "*Manibus O date lilia plenis*" (*Æn. vi. 884; Purg. xxx. 11-21*). These herald-songs that meet the ear have their counterpart in what meets the eye. There is a vision as of the clear shining of an Easter dawn when the sun emerges from its cloudy tent (*Purg. xxx. 10-27*). And then there comes the final revelation of Beatrice, Madonna-like in her beauty, and arrayed in the symbolic colours, the white, green, and crimson, with which early Italian art clothed its ideal of that Madonna (*Purg. xxx. 28-33*). Of that meeting, as far as it belonged to Dante's confession, I have already spoken. It remains, however, to note the significance of the place which it occupies in the long process of purification. It is not till the soul has been cleansed from its last baseness, and conquered its last besetting sin, and passed through the agonising fire, that it learns to comprehend fully the root-evil of which the seven deadly sins were but the manifold outgrowth. Then, at last, it sees that there had been throughout an unfaithfulness to God. Disloyalty to her who had first wakened in him the sense of a higher life, of an eternal good, had been disloyalty to Him who, through her, had sought to lead him to Himself. When that confession has been made, then, and not till then, the

time has come for the baptism of a new regeneration, in what for him is as the passage of a new Jordan (*Purg.* xxxi. 91-105). The river which he thus crossed was none other than the stream of Lethe, which Dante, with a profound insight, though in defiance of all Christian tradition, thus places as all but the final stage of purification. He had felt, as all souls that have passed through the crisis of conversion have felt, that what is needed for the soul is that its memory may be cleansed from all the evil of the past; that as God "blots out as a thick cloud its transgressions, and as a cloud its sins" (*Isai.* xlv. 2), so it too may forget the past, or remember it only as belonging to an alien and a vanished self.¹ That cleansing of the conscience as with the blood of sprinkling, so that it becomes white as snow, makes the vision of the Eternal Truth no longer overwhelming, for it is coupled with the vision of the Christ, as the Gryphon of the mystic symbolism, in His divine and human unity (*Purg.* xxxi. 121-145). The power of that vision of the truth, falling short only of the ineffably beatific vision of the Divine glory (here also with special stress laid on the humanity that was joined with the Eternal Word), which ends the *Paradiso*, as this all but ends the *Purgatorio*, to complete the work of Lethe in blotting out the memory of the evil past, is indicated by a touch of the skill of the supreme artist. Beatrice unfolds to him an apocalypse of the past and future of the Church and the Empire, which is to correct his former theories.

"That thou may'st know, she said, how stands that school,
Which thou hast followed, and its doctrines scan,
And learn how far it follows my true rule."

And then, unconscious of reproach, the very confessions which had just passed from his lips remembered no more, he makes his reply:—

"And then I answered, 'Memory writes not here
That I have e'er estranged myself from thee,
Nor doth my conscience wake remorseful fear.'"

—*Purg.* xxxiii. 85-93.

Well may Beatrice tell him that his Lethe-draught has been free and full, and feel that the time has come for it to be followed by that from the other mystic river—absolutely the pure creation of the poet's mind, which revives the memory of every good deed

¹ The stress which Dante laid on this thought is seen in the fact that he returns to it again in the case of Cunizza (*Par.* ix. 103-105).

done, and so, completing the transformation wrought out by Lethe, gives to the new man, the true self, the continuity of life which had seemed before to belong to the old, the false and evil, self.¹ I do not inquire how far such a philosophy of consciousness is tenable in itself, or may be reconciled with acknowledged truths in ethics or theology; but it will be admitted that there is a transcendent greatness in its very conception which places Dante high among the spiritual teachers of mankind. One who could picture that state to himself as the completion of his pilgrimage, the perfected result of the regenerate life begun in baptism, must at least have had some foretaste of ecstatic rapture, of communion with the Eternal Wisdom, and of the infinite goodness which had convinced him of its possibility; and so the closing lines of the *Purgatorio* have definitely the autobiographical element which I have endeavoured to trace as permeating the whole of this part of the *Commedia* (*Purg.* xxxiii. 110-145). Of other portions of the purifying process I must be content to speak more briefly. There are the sculptures on wall and ground in C. x. and xii., which represent respectively the examples of lowliness and of rebellious pride, and in which we find the artist-poet's conception of the function of art as a teacher of mankind, presenting vividly to the eye what, left to the words of the historian, was likely to fall on dull and apathetic ears. Such lessons he might have learnt himself in the Giotto frescoes of the Arena Chapel at Padua or in those of the church of Assisi. More definitely he may have had in his mind the bas-reliefs of Niccola and Giovanni Pisano, and the pupils of the former, Lapo and Arnolfo (*Linds.*, i. pp. 357-371), or the paintings and sculptures with which Can Grande was said to have adorned his palace at Verona, so that each guest might find in his room what was appropriate to his character and calling. Scarcely less suggestive is the part which he assigns in the work of purification, not to the formal teaching of history, sacred or secular, but to the words which come into men's minds, as it were, by chance, brought as "by airy tongues that syllable men's names." These also, as in the instance of the "*Virum non cognosco*" (*Purg.* xxv. 128), the "*Vinum non habent*" (*Purg.* xiii. 29), the "Whoever findeth me shall slay me" (*Purg.* xiv. 133), may come, as germs of future

¹ The thought which the symbolism suggests may possibly be traced to the words of *Matt.* xxv. 34-40, perhaps also to *John* iii. 21.

thoughts, "winged words," as seeds are winged, that they may float to their proper soil, and take root downward and bear fruit upward.

From first to last, however, as we see these processes of the soul's cleansing, the question is forced upon us, how was it that Dante's thoughts of Purgatory were so different from those which were at least fostered by ecclesiastical tradition? Though the great theologians of the schools had shrunk from defining a matter lying so largely in the region of the unknown, the dominant opinion was that there was one and the same fire for both Hell and Purgatory, the difference between them being one of duration only; that Hell and Purgatory were therefore in the same region, divided only as by a middle wall of partition. That thought embodied itself in the popular representations of the souls in the flames of Purgatory.¹ It was stamped on the minds of men throughout one region of Europe by the name of *Fegefeuer* for the purgatorial process. Even in the picture drawn by Dante's great master, the souls that are capable of purification are seen in the same region as those that endure an everlasting punishment (*Æn.* vi. 735-747). In the *Vision of Alberic* those souls are for a time tormented in an extensive plain covered with thorns and brambles, till at last they escape into a very pleasant field filled with purified souls, where their torn members and garments are immediately restored (Wright's *St. Patr. Purg.*, p. 118).

Among the floating legends of the time there was indeed one which may have suggested Dante's treatment of the subject-matter of his second Canticque. In the story of St. Brandan (Wright's *Life of St. Brandan*), an abbot who comes to visit him tells him how he and his companions, moved by strange reports he had heard from a brother abbot, sailed for forty days and forty nights due east, and then for three days and nights due west, and then they came to "a fair island full of flowers, herbs, and trees," and the birds, who were angels that had joined Lucifer in his rebellion, but were not shut out from pardon, sang their songs of praise at matins and at prime,² and the other hours that Christians use; and then

¹ *E.g.*, the sculpture over the gateway of All Souls' College, Oxford.

² A friend (C. J. P.) suggests that this may possibly connect itself with *Purg.* xxviii. 16, taking *ore* as the "early hours" of the day, and quotes Sir William Dunbar's *Thistle and Rose*—

"And lusty May, that mudder is of floures,
Had made the birds to begyn their houres,"

as a parallel, and possibly a reminiscence.

seven days more brought them to another island, full of stench and fire of Hell. Here, if anywhere in the traditions of the past, we may find the starting-point of the Mount of Cleansing, open to the sun and air, with pleasant valleys and a quiet resting-place, rising from the waters of the ocean.¹

I question, however, whether we may not rather trace the poet's conceptions in this matter to the force of his own character and imagination, working on the materials which the incidents of his own time brought within his reach. We have seen in the Ulysses episode (*H.* xxvi. 85-142) traces of Dante's sympathy with the enterprising spirit of the thirteenth century, of which Marco Polo was the great representative, indications, in the allusions to Tartars (*H.* xvii. 17) and the dockyard of Venice (*H.* xxi. 7) and the Southern Cross (*Purg.* i. 23) of what he may have learnt through his acquaintance with the great traveller. From the merchant-sailors of Pisa and Genoa and Marseilles he may well have heard tales of their adventurous voyages. Though their enterprise was confined for the most part to the Mediterranean and its shores, some at least may have sailed through the Straits of Gibraltar, and brought back their report of the Peak of Teneriffe as it soared above the waters in its lonely greatness. Combining that report with the theory of a vast ocean covering the whole of one hemisphere of the earth's surface, and with impressions which he himself may have had as he looked on the waters of the Atlantic from the shores of Spain or France or England, there seems to me sufficient to account for the thoughts which are embodied in the *Purgatorio*. He at least could find nothing purifying or remedial in what he had imagined and described of Hell. Not in the cavern depths of earth, but where the light trembles on the waters, must be the scene of man's purification.

Not less striking is the contrast between Dante's imagined locality of the earthly Paradise as on the summit of the Mount of Cleansing (*Purg.* xxviii.) and that which had been handed down from the past and floated in traditions round him. Here, indeed, there had been more forerunners than in the case of Purgatory. The site of Paradise had been found as "an island in the eastern ocean" (*St.*

¹ Bede, *Eccles. Hist.*, v. 12, supplies another vision of a brighter Purgatory even than Dante's: "A vast and delightful field, full of fragrant flowers, in which were innumerable assemblies of men in white." Bede, it will be remembered, is one of the writers whom Dante specially honoured (*Par.* x. 131). Comp. Perez, *Purgatorio*, p. 42.

Brandan's Voyage). Some mediæval maps place it as an island opposite the mouth of the Ganges, surrounded, as Dante describes, by a wall of fire (*Hereford Mapp. Mund.*, xxi. 25). Others, keeping closer to the narrative of *Genesis* ii., found it in the regions of Armenia (Baring Gould, *Curious Myths*, pp. 250-265). So far Dante was free to choose whether he would place it as an island or in a continent; but in localising it on the very summit of the Mount of Purgatory he obviously followed the bent of his own symbolising genius. The truth which he sought to embody in that outward form was (1) that this was the natural close of all that Purgatory could accomplish; (2) that all the purifying processes of repentance and discipline could not lead men beyond the point of perfection and of bliss, from which, as he viewed the history of the human race, man had started, and which he had, in the very day of his creation, forfeited. For those who were saved in Christ there was reserved some better thing—the communion of the soul with God, the beatific vision of the saints, attainable only through the Incarnation:—

“ And that a higher gift than grace
Should flesh and blood refine,
God's Presence and His very Self
And Essence all divine.”

—J. H. NEWMAN, *Dream of Gerontius*.

PART III.



VI.

PARADISE.

It is not hard to fix the limits of the concluding portion of Dante's great work. What I have said as to the *terminus ad quem* of the *Purgatorio* fixes 1311 as a date before which the *Paradiso* could not well have been begun. I am disposed, from internal evidence, to fix a somewhat later date. The excitement with which the poet, as his letters show, watched the progress of Henry VII. was not favourable to a work which called more than all that had gone before it for calmness and self-recollection. The bitterness of disappointment which followed on the failure of Henry's enterprise (see *Canz.* xxi.) and his death in 1313 was, in the nature of things, even less propitious, and the absence of any trace of that bitterness in the opening Cantos of the *Paradiso* suggests the thought that there had been time for the wounds to heal. The traditional sojourn at Gubbio and the monastery of Fonte Avellana, assigned to this period, may have given the leisure and the retirement which were necessary for that healing. On the whole, it does not, I think, seem probable that Dante entered on the work of writing the *Paradiso* before 1315.

It must be remembered, moreover, that the *Paradiso*, in its metaphysics, its ethics, its theology, presents evidence of wider and profounder studies than either of the other parts of the poem. In this respect it stands nearly on the same level with the *Convito*, to which it presents at once a parallel and a contrast—like it in the wide range of reading which it implies, unlike it as to the regions of study which come within that range. Of the physical science which is prominent in both works we have a crucial instance in the discussion on the moon's spots in *Par.* ii. The *Convito* (ii. 14)

maintains one theory, the *Paradiso* rejects that as baseless and substitutes another. The new theory is identical with that maintained by the great scientist of the thirteenth century, Roger Bacon (*Op. Tert.*, c. 37). The experiment with mirrors which illustrates the theory (*Par.* ii. 97) is exactly after Bacon's mind. It is possible, of course, that both theory and experiment may have come to Dante through other channels, but there is at least presumptive *primâ facie* evidence that the mind of the poet had come in contact with that of the philosopher. The three books which Bacon wrote for Clement IV. in 1266 had been brought to Rome, and were probably therefore accessible in Italy. Dante, as has been suggested elsewhere (*Cont. Rev.*, Sept. 1881), may have met him in England. He had resided so long in Paris that his teaching was likely to be well known in the schools of science there. Any one of these possibilities presents a fair working hypothesis. The last is somewhat strengthened by the fact that the theological philosophy of Aquinas, the mystical theology of Bonaventura and Hugh of St. Victor, the devout Mariolatry of St. Bernard, would all naturally point to Paris as a starting-point. So far as we are builders of hypotheses, we are of course free to assume a possible visit to Paris after the close of Henry VII.'s enterprise, and this view has found favour with one or two Dante experts. I do not lay stress on it. All that I contend for is an interval of leisure during which the knowledge, of which the *Paradiso* bears so many traces, was acquired and stored up for use. It is at least probable that the examination on Faith, Hope, and Charity in *Par.* xxiv.-xxvi. may be a reminiscence of the time when he stood as a *baccalaureus* waiting for the examining master to propose his questions.

The Dedicatory Epistle to Can Grande was obviously written after the completion of the whole poem, but it bears no date either of time or place, and we are therefore left to infer them from internal evidence. This points, if I mistake not, to the time which followed after he had left Verona, in 1318-19. He speaks (C. 1) of his visit as a thing belonging to the past. He had heard of the fame of his benefactor's princely munificence, and had gone, as the Queen of the South came to see the glory of Solomon, to discover how far the fame rested on a firm foundation. He had found, as she did, that the half of his greatness had not been told him.

Respect and esteem had ripened into a deeper feeling, and he could now write as a "most devoted friend." He was conscious of the disparity in their outward lots, but such a disparity had been no bar in many instances famous in the past to the existence of a true friendship, and he felt that it need not be so between him and his illustrious patron. He has long wished to offer some outward tribute of that affection. He has looked over all his works, that he might see which was the most appropriate for such a purpose. He comes to the conclusion that the *Cantica sublimis* of the *Paradiso* is that which is most worthy of acceptance.

The fact of the dedication shows, as I have already pointed out (vol. i. p. cxxii.), that the idle gossip as to the poet's sensitiveness to his patron's sarcasms do not carry much weight with them. Whatever they were at the moment, they left no sting behind them to rankle in his memory. He could look on Can Grande as worthy of reverence and admiration—of the highest honour which it was in his power to offer him. He was not afraid to place in his hands the poem in which he had spoken of the bitterness of dependence. He could say with all the truthfulness which belongs to one who felt that he was writing for future ages, that his friend had not disappointed him; that the courtesy of the mighty Lombard was such that he gave before men asked him, and more than they had asked (*Par.* xvii. 73-75); that his life and rule had filled up the outlines of the "Greyhound" prophecy of *H.* i.; that on him, as the Imperial Vicar in Northern Italy, rested, if anywhere, the poet's hopes of the ideal Empire.

I have spoken, at an earlier stage of this study, of the *Epistle to Can Grande* so far as it bears on the general structure of the poem as a whole, of the manifold method of interpretations which might be applied to it. Besides these, however, there are hints, dropped here and there, which throw light upon the feelings, thoughts, and studies of the poet's later years. He will enter on his task of exposition, he says, "counting life but of little worth" (*vitam parvipendens*), as compared with the affection which he seeks to win. I seem to recognise in this the language of a man who feels prematurely old, who sees that the end of his labours is not far off, and therefore hastens to complete them. Towards the end of the letter (c. 32) there is a pathetic allusion to his poverty, which points to another cause of anxiety.

In regard to the studies which had occupied the poet's thoughts as he wrote the *Paradiso*, we may note his repeated references to Aristotle in the *Epistle to Can Grande* (to the *Metaphysica* in c. 20; to the *De Causis* in c. 21; to the *Physica* in c. 25; to the *De Cælo* in c. 27); to Boethius (c. 33), to Dionysius the Areopagite (the *De Cælesti Hierarchiâ* in c. 21). From Scripture he quotes *Jer.* xxiii. 24; *Ps.* cxiv. 1 (c. 7), cxxxviii. 7-9; *Wisd. Sol.* i. 7, vii. 14; *Eccles.* v. 16 (c. 28); *Eph.* iv. 10; *Ezek.* xxviii. 12; 2 *Cor.* xii. 3, 4; *Matt.* xvii. 6, 7; *Ezek.* ii. 1 (c. 28); *John* xvii. 3 (c. 33), and *Rev.* i. 8. Seneca and Terence are referred to, and Horace (*A. P.* 89-91) quoted in c. 10. Cicero (*Nov. Rhet.*) is quoted in c. 19; Lucan in c. 22; his old teacher Boethius in c. 33. It is significant that the words which he cites from the last-named writer, "*Te cernere finis*"—the words are spoken as to God—are placed in the closest parallelism with *John* xvii. 3, which, as he quotes it (his variation from the Vulgate is noticeable), runs, "*Hæc est vera beatitudo ut cognoscant te Deum verum,*" &c. I have reserved to the last a passage (c. 28) which is the most significant of all, as throwing light upon the studies of these later years. He has defended himself for having said in the *Paradiso* that he had seen many things which he could not reproduce, by a reference to St. Paul's language, when he spoke of his ascent to Paradise, where he heard words "which it was not possible for a man to utter" (2 *Cor.* xii. 3), by a reference also to the seeming meagreness of the Gospel narrative of the Transfiguration. But he has precedents closer at hand and nearer to his own time. "If these are not enough," he adds, "for my carping critics, let them read Richard of St. Victor in his book *De Contemplatione*; let them read Bernard in his book *De Consideratione*; let them read Augustine in his book *De Quantitate Animæ*, and they will carp no longer." That, I take it, is a sufficient proof of the nature of the studies which occupied the closing years of the poet's life. It is confirmed by the positions which he assigns to Richard of St. Victor in *Par.* x. 131, to Augustine in *Par.* x. 120, to St. Bernard in *Par.* xxxi.-xxxiii.

Not less striking, in the witness which the poem bears to the return of the poet's mind to its first faith and first love, is the stress laid on the lives and achievements of the founders of the two great Mendicant Orders. Whatever proofs of corruption and degeneracy might be found in their followers—and of these Dante speaks with

an unsparing severity (*Par.* xi. 124-139)—they were still for him the great witnesses of the truth of Christ against the falsehood and evil of the world, the great champions of the true Church in its conflict with heresy, or with the covetousness of popes and prelates. Whatever value we attach to the tradition that he had in his earlier years joined the Franciscan Order, and had afterwards abandoned it for what seemed the more excellent way of a self-discipline which presented no temptations, as the Franciscan Order did, to a formal hypocrisy (vol. i. p. lv.), there is something significant in the fact that he was buried, we may well believe by his own choice, in a chapel attached to the Franciscan church at Ravenna; that according to a less credible tradition he was interred in the garb of the Franciscan Order.

In the list of names associated with those of St. Francis and St. Dominic in *Par.* xii. 127-141 we may legitimately see farther traces of the later studies of Dante's life, or of the feelings which led him to choose as the objects of his reverence the great teachers, the great pastors, the great reformers of the Church. Of his indebtedness to Hugh of St. Victor I have already spoken. We note how he admires the first followers of St. Francis, the men who had the courage amidst the scorn and derision of their fellows to walk barefoot and to wear the cord; how he signalises the heroism of the three, Nathan, Chrysostom, Anselm, who had had the courage to stand before kings and emperors and rebuke them with a lion-like boldness. But the names in that list which are, I believe, most significant are the first and the last, Bonaventura and the Abbot Joachim of Fiori (*Par.* xii. 127-145).

The glory of the Franciscan Order culminated in the former of those teachers. He had received his name (he had been baptized as Giovanni) from the lips of St. Francis himself, who, on looking at him in his childhood, had exclaimed, as in the spirit of prophecy, "*O buona ventura!*" The saintliness of his life was such that it passed into a proverb that "all men were born with original sin except Bonaventura." His training at Paris under Alexander Hales, the *Doctor Irrefragabilis*, qualified him for his work as a professor of theology at the age of twenty-four at that University (1245), and his comments on the "*Sentences*" of Peter Lombard placed him, if not on the same level as Aquinas, yet, at least, in the foremost rank of the theologians of his time. In

1256 he was chosen General of the Franciscan Order, received the cardinal's hat at the hands of Gregory X. in 1273 (he was then in a convent at Florence), and died in 1274. True to the spirit of the saint of Assisi, Bonaventura was, however, with all his scholasticism, emphatically the *Doctor Seraphicus*. In him the mystic predominated over the dogmatist, and of all the treatises that fill the seven folio volumes of his works, none so impressed itself on the minds of men, none was so likely to fascinate a mind like Dante's, as the *Life of St. Francis*. Of that Life the eleventh Canto of the *Paradiso* is, in fact, an epitome. Through both there runs the same thought, that of all the saints of God there had been none who so absolutely reproduced the holiness of Christ as Francis had reproduced it. Step by step the *Imitatio Christi* in his instance, in his espousals with evangelic poverty, in his homeless wanderings, in his love of souls, finally in the crowning miracle of the *stigmata*, amounts to a transformation, culminates in a parallelism not far from an equality. If it would be over-bold to say that Dante's Life of St. Francis could scarcely have been written by one who had not studied Bonaventura's book, it is yet true that the assumption that he had studied it, supplies the most natural explanation of all that is most characteristic in it.¹

I am led to attribute hardly less influence on Dante's mind in this, emphatically the theological period of his life, to the last named of the goodly fellowship of the doctors of the Church, the Abbot Joachim di Fiori of Calabria. The religious movements of the thirteenth century are indeed scarcely to be understood without taking his influence on them into account. And from Dante's standpoint (*Par.* xii. 140) he was more than a doctor of the Church, and had written as one gifted with the spirit that spake by the prophets. I pass over the incidents of his earlier years, his pilgrimage to Palestine, his forty days' fast on Mount Tabor, and will confine myself to the later years of his life, when towards the close of the twelfth century he, in his Calabrian monastery, brooded over the evils of the Church, its corruptions,

¹ An interesting illustration of Dante's indebtedness to Bonaventura is given by Paolo Perez in his volume on the *Purgatorio* (p. 266). In the *Speculum Beata Maria Virginis* which bears the Seraphic Doctor's name he dwells on the fact that the Virgin Mother showed herself by word and act to be free from every taint of the seven deadly sins which are cleansed in the circles of Purgatory, to be the helper of those who fall into them. So Dante introduces some word or act of hers into every circle, and two of these, the *Ecce Ancilles Domini* and the *Virum non cognosco*, are selected also by Bonaventura (*Spec. B. V. M.*, c. iv.)

simony, nepotism, and greed of gain, and embodied his thoughts in his comments on the prophetic writings of Scripture. Of the many writings that passed current under the sanction of his venerated name, three at least are recognised by experts as authentic—the *Concordantia* of the Old and New Testament, a Commentary on the Apocalypse, and a *Psalterium Decem Chordarum*. Attached to the last of these are two hymns on Paradise, in the second of which Renan thinks (*New Studies*, p. 22) that we may see one of the precursors of the *Commedia* not less clearly than in the other writings of like nature which have been gathered by Ozanam, Labitte, and Thomas Wright, and of which I have already spoken in the first two parts of this study. In other books, notably in a Commentary on Jeremiah, he was believed to have foretold the advent of the two founders of the Mendicant Orders in terms such as Dante uses when he describes them as the two wheels of the Church's chariot, on which it was to move onward in its victorious course. Joachim was, in Renan's phrase, "the Baptist of St. Francis." He at any rate looked forward to a revived Church, without wealth and state, with teachers who renounced every form of possession under a *papa angelicus*. That was to be the crowning glory of the third state of the Church when it was to be under the dispensation of the Spirit, as Israel had been under the dispensation of the Father, and Christendom, till then, under that of the Son. When the Franciscans became numerous and powerful, it was natural that they should see in Joachim the prophet of their Order; equally natural perhaps that they should exaggerate and distort his teaching. His fame spread to far-off lands, and even in England we find Adam of Marsh collecting all fragments of his writings that he could lay hold on and sending them to Roger Bacon, to be forwarded by him to Grosseteste, Bishop of Lincoln.¹

About the middle of the thirteenth century, when the Franciscan brotherhood were falling from their first love and accepting the relaxations of their vow of poverty which successive Popes had granted them, those who lamented the degeneracy, as Dante laments it (*Par.* xi., xii), fell back under the guidance of the General of the Order, John of Parma, afterwards deposed, on the

¹ Adam looks on him as having been endowed with a true prophetic inspiration. He hopes the Bishop will profit by his warnings, copy the MSS., and return them (Brewer, *Monum. Francisc.*, pp. 146-147).

authority of Joachim. In Rousselot's estimate of his character (*Hist. de l'Évangile Éternel*, 1861, p. 44), he was of kindred spirit with the recluse contemplative spirits of the twelfth century, notably with those whom Dante has in honour, Hugh and Richard of St. Victor. There is "*même éloignement pour l'école, même recours à la foi, même retour à la raison, même base pour leur mysticisme, l'amour.*" But after his death he became, as it were, against his will, the founder of a sect. Passages from his writings were put together, not without interpolations, probably by John of Parma or some of his disciples, and became the basis of the book, or the tradition, known as the *Everlasting Gospel*, in which the more exalted Franciscans saw the fulfilment of *Rev.* xiv. 6. An *Introduction to the Everlasting Gospel* epitomised and popularised the substance of what perhaps never existed as a complete volume, in 1254, and became the starting-point in the controversy between the Universities and the Friars, which lasted during the last half of the thirteenth century, and of which the treatise *De Periculis Novissimorum Temporum*, the great counterblast against the *Everlasting Gospel*, by William de St. Amour, Rector of the University of Paris, is the most conspicuous monument. The wider history of that controversy does not fall within the scope of my inquiry. What I wish to note is that Dante could not have been ignorant of it; that either in his earlier studies in the schools of the religious orders (*Conv.* ii. 13), or his later visits to Franciscan houses, he must have come into personal contact with many who had taken part in it, and that we can trace its influence in his writings. He does not indeed identify himself with the preachers of the *Everlasting Gospel*. His reverence for Aquinas and Bonaventura kept him clear from the wild fanaticism which would have overthrown all systematic theology in the name of a direct spiritual illumination. His strong feeling of the part which art had to play in the religious education of mankind (*Purg.* x., xii.) made him hold aloof from those to whom the frescoes of Assisi and all other glories of art in painting, architecture, sculpture, were an abomination. All the same, however, there were many points in which "his chariot was as their chariot, and his horses as their horses." They had looked to Celestine V. as the Pope who, coming from his lonely hermitage, was to realise all their aspirations (*Renan*, p. 295), and Dante's bitterness against

him who had made "*il gran rifiuto*" is best explained by the fact that he too had cherished like aspirations, and could not forgive the act by which they were frustrated. They, the "Fratricelli," the disciples of John of Parma, hated Boniface VIII., who suppressed the Celestinians, with a perfect hatred, and the bitter phrases with which Dante speaks of him are but an echo of the hard words which they had used before him (*Renan*, p. 292). They laid it down that none could be fit for the work of an evangelist but the barefooted followers of St. Francis, and Dante (*Par.* xi. 80) is careful to make that the crowning glory of St. Francis and his early followers. The deeper thoughts, the wider range of studies, the theories of the *De Monarchiâ*, and the instinct of the supreme artist-poet emancipated him from bondage to their superstition and their extravagances, but not the less did he incorporate with his own thoughts what he had found in them. In the feeling that the Roman Curia was the Babylon and the Harlot of the Apocalypse (*Purg.* xxxii. 149) he was entirely of one mind with them.

This return, however, to what one may call a more orthodox standpoint than that of his middle life was united with an almost startling boldness of conception within the limits of what he held to be the Church's faith, and yet beyond the limits of the regions of thought which she had surveyed, and over which she had thrown her landmarks of dogma and definition. From the Apocalypse onward there had been many visions of the celestial glories. The gates of pearl and the walls of gold, the fair champaign, the bright flowers, the tree and the water of life, were familiar enough, and therefore the poet, seeking the *avia Pieridum loca*, the "things unattempted yet in prose or rhyme," was not contented with them. He climbed the solitary heights of knowledge, and looked out as from a Darien-peak vision-point upon the new unexplored ocean which he was about to traverse. He warns those who had so far followed him. It was no voyage upon a summer sea. It were better that they should turn back than attempt a task beyond the limits of their powers (*Par.* ii. 1-15). The vision of Paradise which had come before his thoughts, and which he was to set before his readers, was indeed a new one. To combine the Ptolemaic system of the planetary spheres, the popular astrological dogma of planetary influences, affecting, though not determining, the characters

of men through the temperaments which they imparted at men's birth, the Platonic theory that the souls of men return to the starry spheres under which they were born, or from which they came, and the celestial hierarchy of Dionysius the Areopagite, and yet to maintain the orthodox dogma that the saints are, as the general assembly of the just, gathered round the throne of God, and that the bliss of each is measured by the degree in which he is capable of entering into the Beatific Vision, this was indeed a complex and arduous enterprise, such as had never before entered into a poet's imagination. And the wings of his flight soared to yet loftier heights than this, to regions in which the conditions of time and space, that limit our thoughts here, had ceased to be. The scheme which fills the greater part of the *Paradiso* made the Empyrean Heaven, the heaven of repose and calm, the dwelling-place of God and of His saints, the supreme sphere of the *cosmos*, enveloping all other spheres. It was necessary, in order that he might present his thoughts of the unseen world in their completeness, that he should bring before men's mental vision a yet more spiritual vision, in which God was not the circumference, but the centre of the universe, which radiates light and love to the nine orders of the heavenly hierarchy, according to their capacities for receiving them. And to present this, the vision of God, as the intensest light, the contemplation of which obliterates all memory of the past, so that, as in the well-known legend of the Monk and the Bird,¹ a thousand years are as a single day, rather as a single individual moment; the presentation of the Son and the Spirit in the unity of the Godhead as two luminous circles deriving their glory from that central light, even as the great doctors of the Church had taught that the divinity of the Father was the *fons et principium* of that of the other two Persons, co-equal and co-eternal;—to unite with this the doctrine of the Incarnation of the Word in the vision of one like unto the Son of Man, in that blaze of glory—this was what no poet or theologian had ever ventured on in the highest mystic contemplation, and which was only possible for one who united in himself the supreme excellence of both. From the standpoint of the Catholic theology,

¹ The legend has been often told. As the most conspicuous instance of its reproduction, I may mention Bishop Ken's *Hymnarium* (p. 20), Trench (*Justin Martyr and other Poems*), and Longfellow's *Golden Legend*.

in which Dante had been trained, it may be said, in the words of one of its chief living representatives—

"*Post Paradisum Dantis nihil est nisi visio Dei.*"¹

And with this, as not seldom happens in the history of religious thought, there is a profounder sense of the limitations of man's power to judge the mysteries of the Divine government, leading to a wider hope than that with which the poet had started. He states with a boldness almost without precedent or parallel in mediæval thought, the case, so to speak, for the salvation of the heathen (*Par.* xix. 70-78). He enlarges his theory as to the necessity of baptism so as to admit some, at least, of unbaptized infants, those of Patriarchal and Jewish dispensation, as among the Innocents of Paradise (*H.* iv. 30-36; *Par.* xxxii. 75-84). He gives an altogether new turn to his thoughts as to the heathen who knew not God as He specially revealed Himself through Moses or through Christ, by dwelling not only, as in *Purg.* x. 73-93, on the instance of Trajan (that was explained, it will be remembered, on the assumption that the Emperor was restored to life that he might repent and be instructed in the faith), but also on that of Rhipeus (*Par.* xx. 67-72), whose righteousness ("*justissimus unus*," Virg., *Æn.* ii. 426) was, by a process the converse of that on which St. Paul dwelt in the case of Abraham, counted to him for faith, and led him indeed to an actual faith in the yet unmanifested Christ, as being in very deed "the Light that lighteth every one that cometh into the world."² It was not only or chiefly in respect of his dream of a return to Florence crowned with the poet's laurel, or of the fulfilment of his ideal of a true Empire working in union with a true

¹ Cardinal Manning, in a letter to Father Bowden, commending his translation of Hettinger's "*Dante's Göttliche Comödie*" to English readers.

² I can scarcely refrain from connecting this enlargement of heart with Dante's intercourse with Marco Polo and other travellers. It happened in this case, as in so many others, that actual mission-work among the heathen led men to recognise that they also might be "a law unto themselves." Polo had brought back word of the righteous government of Kubla Khan. Two Dominicans were sent to him as missionaries by Gregory X. in 1274. Innocent IV. sent two Franciscans in 1289, one of them Johannes de Monte Corvino, who returned in 1305. He reported that he had built a church with dome and bells in Cambalu (Pekin); that he had trained 150 boys in Greek and Latin; that he had made 6000 converts, and had prepared breviaries and psalteries for their use. He adds that he had found their "*religiosi*" (i.e., Buddhist monks) more worthy of admiration than those of Italy. He is struck with the tolerance that prevails among them, resting on the belief "*quod unusquisque in sua secta salvetur*." Is not the whole discussion in *Par.* x. xix. just what might have been expected when a mind like Dante's came into contact with facts like these? (Wetzer and Welte, *Art. Johannes de Monte Corvino*.)

Church for the welfare of mankind, that he could say with truth that there was no child of the Church of Christ fuller of the grace of hope than he was (*Par.* xxv. 52).

And hope, as far as Florence was concerned, was united with a return to the vivid memories of the past. The wearied exile recalled every gate and wall, almost every house and its inhabitants, of the city he had loved (*Par.* xv., xvi.) It was a delight to him to dwell on the glories of its past greatness in contrast with its present degradation. The traditions of his own childhood, the surroundings of his own nursery, came back to him with all the distinctness of an old man's recollection of the early days of youth (*Par.* xv. 118-126). They taught him, as such memories teach us all, the lessons of the mutability of all earthly things. "One generation passeth away, and another generation cometh, but the earth abideth for ever." Half the great families of the Florence of the past were now little more than names in its history, or had fallen into poverty and decay. And it taught him also the thought, to which he had already given utterance in *Canz.* xvi. and in *Conv.* iv., founded on it, as to the nature of true nobility. He saw, even when tempted by the story of the illustrious founder of his family to exult in his own ancestry, that the true nobleness which marks a man as distinguished above his fellows is not found in pedigrees or wealth, but in righteousness of soul and scorn of baseness (*Par.* xvi. 1-9).

And Beatrice! What, we ask, were the thoughts of the closing years of the poet's life as he looked back on the consuming passion of the *Vita Nuova*? Here also, if I mistake not, we may note a difference between the *Paradiso* and the earlier portions of the *Commedia*. The personal element of her interposition to work out his salvation, as in *H.* ii, of her manifestation as reproaching him with his disloyalty and unfaithfulness, as in *Purg.* xxx., xxxi., is less prominent. The beatification, the apotheosis, if the word be not too bold, is more complete. She is idealised as the impersonation of Heavenly Wisdom, as the "*donna gentile*" had been idealised in the *Convito* period of his life as the impersonation of Philosophy (*Conv.* ii. 13-16). What he had said of the eyes of the latter as being the symbols of the demonstrations of Philosophy (*Conv.* ii. 16) is now transferred to the eyes of Beatrice as presenting the intuitions of Theology, and

the demonstrations resting on them. And they glow, as she leads him from sphere to sphere, with an ever-increasing beauty (*Conv.* ii. 16). He has drunk of the waters of Lethe, and the passionate love and sorrow of those early years, the transgressions which had offended her during her life, and even after her visible presence had been withdrawn from him, lie behind him as a thing belonging to the past. He has drunk also of the waters of Eunoe, and he remembers every aspiration after wisdom and holiness which had originated in her influence over him. To her he owes the salvation that had been wrought out for him in its completeness, and he is content to think of her as taking her place among the highest of the saints of God. In that high exaltation he cannot hope to follow her, and is content to gaze on her transfigured beauty (*Par.* xxxi. 73, xxxii. 8). And in this change of standpoint we may find, I believe, the explanation of what at first is somewhat startling—the absence of any parting words on her side, when she ceases to be the poet's guide and companion, such as had been spoken by Virgil before he vanished from the scene (*Purg.* xxvii. 127-141). Dante has seen the vision of the Eternal Rose in the Empyrean Heaven. His eyes have scanned the hosts of the blessed ones in their ordered ranks, and he turns round to inquire of her "of many things which on his spirit weighed."

"One thing I meant ; another met my quest,
I looked for Beatrice, and behold !
An old man clothed as are the people blest."

—*Par.* xxxi. 54-60.

Her last act in the *Commedia* had been like her first. She had then committed him to the care of Virgil as the representative of Human Wisdom. She now commits him to the care of Bernard, who reports that he has been sent by her as the representative of the Divine Wisdom which is one with a true Theology. He looks and sees her far above him as is the height of heaven from the depths of ocean (*Par.* xxxi. 73-76). There comes from his lips the full utterance of pent-up thanksgiving:—

"Lady, in whom my hope breathes quickening air,
And who for my salvation didst endure
To pass to Hell and leave thy footprints there ;
Of all mine eyes have seen with vision pure,
As coming from thy goodness and thy might,
I the full grace and mercy know full sure.

Thou me, a slave, to freedom didst invite,
 By all the means and all the methods whence
 The power could spring to work such ends aright.
 Still keep for me thy great munificence,
 So that my soul, which owes its health to thee,
 May please thee, free from each corporeal sense."

—*Par. xxxi.* 79-90.

He speaks, but Beatrice is silent, and answers only with a glance and with the "loving smile," and then

"Turned to the Fount that flows eternally."

That is the last word of the history which began in the vision of child-like beauty with which the *Vita Nuova* opens. It is left to Bernard to point to her as she sits side by side with the Virgin and with Rachel, to bring before the poet's eyes the perpetuated vision of the Annunciation in which the Angel Gabriel revealed the mystery of the Word made flesh, to utter the magnificent hymn to the

"Virgin Mother, daughter of thy Son,
 Lowlier and loftier than all creatures seen,
 Goal of the counsels of the Eternal One."

—*Par. xxxiii.* 1-3.

It is given to him to lead the pilgrim to the end of his long journey, to the very threshold of the beatific vision, of which I have already spoken. We can enter, I think, in some measure, as we look back from this closing scene of the *Commedia* over the stages of its genesis and growth, into the feelings with which the poet, with deliberate purpose, traced the letters of its last word with which he had already closed the two previous portions. At first, when he emerged from the darkness of Hell, he had written of himself and Virgil—

"We upward climb, he first and I behind,
 So that I saw the things that beauteous are,
 By high Heaven borne, in opening round defined;
 Thence passed once more to re-behold each star."

—*II. xxxiv.* 136-140.

He passes through the several stages of his purgatorial discipline, and when the work is accomplished and he has drunk of Lethe and of Eunoe—

" I, from that stream that holy is and true
Returned refreshed, as tender flowerlets are
Revived and freshened with a foliage new,
Pure, and made meet to mount where shines each star."

—*Purg.* xxxiii. 142-145.

Now, at last, after the revelation of the height of the Triune
Glory—

" Strength failed that lofty vision to pursue ;
But now, as whirls a wheel with nought to jar,
Desire and will were swayed, in order due,
By Love, that moves the sun and every star."

—*Par.* xxxiii. 142-145.

STUDY II.

ESTIMATES, CONTEMPORARY AND LATER.



I.

How, we ask, did the great poet get his greatness recognised? By what steps, slow or quick, did he rise to fame? What was thought of him by those among whom he lived and moved? In Browning's phrase, "How did it strike a contemporary?" What was thought of him in the centuries that followed by men of different temperaments and calibre, as they took their measure of his work and character from their own standpoint? These are the questions with regard to Dante which I propose endeavouring, with such resources as are within my reach, to answer in this *Study*.

There can be little doubt that, as a young man, Dante gained the reputation, at a singularly early age, of being a poet and a scholar. He was recognised by other poets, some of them older than himself—by Guido Cavalcanti, and Cino of Pistoia, and Dante of Maiano—as one of their company. He could send his sonnets to them when he was but eighteen on the footing of an equal (*V. N.* c. 3). His friends applied to him to find poetic expression for their own emotions (*V. N.* c. 20, 33). The poems included in the *Vita Nuova*, and probably others besides them, some at least of the *Canzoni* and *Sestine*, belong to the same period. The sonnets to Guido and Lapo (*S.* 2) were probably widely circulated among the men of letters at Florence, and some of them, set to music by Casella (*Purg.* ii. 112), were sung at social gatherings of his friends. Latin poems, no longer extant, perhaps contributed to his fame. When he began the *Inferno*, he could speak of the *bello stile* which he had learnt from Virgil, and which had already brought him honour (*H.* i. 87). That he should think of himself as admitted to the company of the five in whom he recognised the great poets of the ancient world (*H.* iv. 102) was perhaps the outcome of his

consciousness of his own capacity; but a man would hardly have ventured on what seemed so boastful without the groundwork of an established reputation, such as that which was recognised when, in 1295, he was registered in the books of the Guild of Apothecaries and Physicians at Florence as "*poeta Fiorentino*." The *Bianchi* and *Neri* troubles, the *coup d'état* of Charles of Valois, the sentences of banishment passed now by this party and now by that, must have broken up those literary gatherings of which I have spoken. In the meantime, journeys to Rome, Siena, Bologna, possibly Paris and Oxford, may have scattered the seeds of future fame. Assuming the genuineness of the Ilarian Letter, his reputation (resting, it will be remembered, entirely on his earlier poems, Italian or Latin) had reached the Monastery of Santa Croce del Corvo in 1309.

There is no evidence—rather there is a strong presumption to the contrary—that the *Commedia* was in any real sense published in Dante's lifetime, and appeared, with other MSS., on the counters of the booksellers (*stationarii* = stall-keepers) in the towns of Italy.¹ Copies were, however, presented—the *Inferno* to Uguccione della Faggiuola; the *Purgatorio* to Moroello Malaspina; last of all, the *Paradiso* to Can Grande. They were probably read, after the manner of the time, to admiring friends and followers. His wanderings in the Casentino and the Lunigiana, his sojourn at Padua and Verona and Ravenna, his friendship with Immanuel of Rome and Giotto and Villani, must all have contributed to enlarge the circle of those who knew him. Soon the nature of the work on which he was engaged became known, and women pointed at him in the streets of Verona, as they looked on his stern features and frizzled beard, as the man who had seen Hell, and had placed in it those who had incurred his displeasure. The *Eclogues* of Joannes de Virgilio show that there was a circle of scholar-poets at Bologna who were ready to welcome him shortly before his death (in 1319–20) with the poet's crown. He was, it may be, reproducing the judgment of others as well as his own when he represents Buonagiunta of Lucca, himself a poet, as recognising the secret of his success:—

¹ It is worth noting, perhaps, that the work of the bookseller was often united with that of the *Spesiale* or apothecary, the calling into the guild of which Dante was himself admitted. It was in the shop of a *Spesiale* at Siena that he stood for hours absorbed in the study of a book while a procession swept by (*Bocc. V. D.*) He may, as regards some, at least, of his works, have been his own publisher.

"And I to him: 'Behold in me a man,
 Who, when love breathes, marks, striving to collect
 What it dictates, and sings it as he can.'
 'Now, brother,' spake he, 'see I that defect
 Which me, the Notary, and Guittone, barred
 From that style new and sweet thou didst affect.
 Well do I now perceive how thy wings hard
 After that sweet dictator upward rose,
 Flight which to us the fates did not award.'"

—*Purg.* xxiv. 52-60.

It may be noted, however, and it confirms what has been already said, that his reputation in this passage is made to rest on one of his minor poems, the *Canzone* in the *Vita Nuova*, which begins—

"O ye who know what Love is, ladies kind."

Meanwhile there were, as might be expected, the valets who cannot understand the hero, and to whom we owe most of the anecdotes of this portion of his life. They told of the instance of absence of mind which I have just mentioned in a footnote. They told how the same absence of mind had led the courtiers at Can Grande's table to the practical joke of piling up their bones under his chair and reproaching him with his voracity. They related how he had offended his host by answering, when asked how it was that the professional buffoon of a prince's court found more favour than the scholar-poet, that it was because "like loved like;" how he burst into fits of impotent rage when he heard blacksmiths and donkey-drivers mar the beauty of his poems as they sang them¹ amid the noises and ejaculations of their respective callings (*Sacch. Nov.* 115). They dwelt on other eccentricities of his character: his training a cat to hold a candle (*Par.* xxvi. 97, *n.*), his way of getting rid of bores,² the marvellous memory which led him to answer two consecutive questions with an interval of a year between them.³

¹ These were obviously the *Ballate* or other minor poems, which Casella and others had set to music; and so far the stories bear witness to the wide-spread popularity which they, and not as yet the *Commedia*, had gained for him.

² The story runs that Dante interrupted one of this class who teased him, with the question, "What is the greatest among beasts?" The answer was "The elephant." The poet then said, "Well then, O elephant, be so good as to depart" (*Frat. V. D.* p. 263).

³ The anecdote is sufficiently trivial, but I give it for what it is worth. "A passer-by asked him as he sat in meditation in a public piazza what was the best meat for a man to break his fast with. 'An egg,' was his answer. Twelve months passed, and the same questioner found him in the same attitude, and said, 'What with?' and the poet said, 'Salt'" (*Frat. V. D.* p. 263).

The part taken by Dante in the enterprise of Henry VII., his letters to the Princes of Italy and the Cardinals at Carpentras, possibly also later studies at Paris, and his diplomatic intercourse on behalf of Guido da Polenta with the Republic of Venice, tended of course to make his personality more widely known, and wherever he went it would be known that he was not a diplomatist only, but a scholar and a poet. As the end of his life drew near, even if the *Commedia* had not been published, it would be known by the Epistle to Can Grande and the correspondence with Joannes de Virgilio that he had seen visions of Purgatory and Paradise as well as Hell.

When that end came, the honour which had been denied him in life was paid in death, and in the stately funeral which his patron at Ravenna gave him, the laureate wreath was placed upon his brow. And then men began to recognise that there had been indeed a prophet among them. The bitterness with which the Pope, John XXII., looked upon the author of the *De Monarchia*, perhaps also on the writer of the lines in *Par.* xxvii. 55-60, might lead him to send the Cardinal del Poggetto to disinter the poet's bones as those of a condemned heretic; but the people of Ravenna refused to part with what they had learnt to count one of the great treasures of their city.¹ The *Commedia* became known; and the tale which Boccaccio reports as to the apparent loss of the last thirteen cantos of the *Commedia*, the trouble which it caused the poet's sons, so that they began to think they must finish it themselves, the discovery of the missing treasure through a vision in which Dante appeared to his sons and told them where the MS. had been deposited, was at once evidence of the interest which the poem was beginning to create, and tended of course to heighten it.²

¹ Comp. the lines of Cino of Pistoia, cxii. :—

*"E quella savia Ravenna che serba
Il suo tesoro, allegria se ne goda."*

² It will not be without interest to note one or two more contemporary estimates.

(1) A sonnet by Bosone of Gubbio, written in the year of Dante's death, and addressed to his friend Immanuel of Rome, also the friend of Dante (vol. i. p. lxxv.), whose wife had died that year. "Never had there been," he says, "a more disastrous season."

*"Ma mi conforta ch'io credo che Dio
Dante ha porto in glorioso scanno."*

"In this is comfort, that I trust that God
Hath placed our Dante in His glorious band."

—PAUR in *D. Gesell.* iii. 456.

(2) A sonnet ascribed to Cino of Pistoia, and addressed to Bosone, in which Dante and

The sons of Dante probably utilised that interest by publishing the *Commedia* as a whole in a more systematic way. Pietro, possibly Jacopo also, thought themselves qualified to interpret

Immanuel are both represented as sharing, with Alessio Interminello, the doom of the flatterers in Hell (*H. xviii. 122*). An answer ascribed to Bosone so far corrects the writer as to place the two poets, not in Hell, but Purgatory. This, however, is so utterly unlike Cino's language elsewhere—e.g. in *Cans. vii.* on the death of Beatrice, in *Sonn. ciii.*, in which he calls Dante "*diletto fratel mio*," in *Cans. cxii.* on the death of Dante, in which he speaks of him as "the fountain in whose waters every conscience might find itself mirrored"—that I agree with Paur (*D. Gestll. iii. 457*) in rejecting both sonnets as spurious. The references to Cino are made from Carducci's edition, 1862.

(3) The poem written by Francesco Stabili, better known as Cecco d'Ascoli, whose ill fate it was to be burnt at Florence as a sorcerer, under the title of *L'Acerba*. In it, from first to last, we have little else than the growls of an ill-natured jealousy. Dante had passed into Hell under Virgil's guidance and had never left it (*l. 2*); he sneers at his teaching as to Fortune, nobility, and love (*ii. 1, 12, iii. 1*); and finally boasts that his poem has no such stories as those of Paolo and Francesca, of Alberic and Ugolino (*iv. 12*). *Frat. V. D. 287-291*.

I owe the following *addenda* to the kindness of a friend (C. J. P.)

(4) A sonnet on Dante's death, written on September 16, 1321, by Pieraccio Tedaldi of Florence, in which he is praised as "more copious in knowledge than Cato, Donatus, or Gualtieri" (*Trucchi, ii.*)

(5) A poem by Mucchio or Mugnon de' Fantinelli of Lucca, who may have known Dante during his sojourn in that city. Of this I give both text and translation:—

*"O spirito gentile, O vero Dante
A noi mortali il frutto della vita,
Dandolo a te la Bontà Infinita
Come congruo e degno mediante;
O verissimo in carne contemplante
Di quella gloria là, dove sortita
E l'anima tua santa oggi partita
Dalla miseria della turba errante;
A te, il quale io credo firmamente
Rispetto alla tua fede e gran virtute,
Essere à più del vero Onnipotente,
Mi raccomando; e per la mia salute
Priego che prieghi quella maestade
Ch'è Uno in Tre, e Tre in Unitade;
Della cui Trinitade
E del cui regno si bene scrivesti
Quanto dimostran tuoi sagrati testi."*

"O gentle spirit, Dante truly named,
Giving to mortal men the fruit of life,
Which Goodness Infinite hath given to thee,
As mediator fit and worthy found;
O thou who in the flesh didst contemplate
With clearest gaze that glory, there, where now
Thy soul has gained its place, at last released
From all the miseries of the erring crowd.
To thee, whom I believe in fullest trust,
When I regard thy faith and virtue great,
To be a suppliant at the Almighty's feet,
I now commend myself, and for my weal,
Pray that thou pray that Majesty Divine,
The One in Three, and Three in Unity.
Thou of that Trinity, and its realm on high,
So well hast written, as thy sacred text
Bears its full witness."—*Crescimbeni, ii. 11.*

(6) A poem by Bosone da Gubbio, who was with Dante after his banishment in Arezzo

their father's mind, and wrote their notes on it, the former, if the work be his, in 1333, the latter in 1340. At a still earlier period, within twelve years of the poet's death, another commentary was written by the *Anonimo Fiorentino*, and one on the *Inferno* by Guido Pisano, a Carmelite friar. The date is fixed in each case by allusions to the statue of Mars as still standing on the Ponte Vecchio of Florence. Villani relates that it was thrown down by the great flood of 1333, and was never restored (note on *H.* xiii. 146; *Vill.* xi. 1). The latter presents some passages which are worth quoting, as showing the extent to which the commentator was able to appreciate his author. He obviously looks on him with the profoundest reverence. "What had been said of Ezekiel's prophetic roll, that it 'was written within and without, full of lamentations and mourning and woe,' was, he says, true of Dante's *Inferno*." He had shown that as a poet he was at once "*comicus, lyricus, satyricus, tragædus*." He speaks of him in a short biography as "*moribus insignitus*," one who "*mortuam poesiam de tenebris eduxit*." He attaches to his commentary a short explanatory poem in *terza rima*, which he calls a "*declaratio super profundissimam et altissimam Comædiam*." The general character of the commentary is one of sympathising insight. In the first canto, Dante, he says, assumes the character of a penitent, and, as such, he needs the *gratia præveniens*, the *gratia illuminans*, the *gratia co-operans*, represented respectively by Virgil, Lucia,

written in *terza rima*, and containing a kind of argument of the *Commedia*. It begins—

" *Però che sia più frutto e più diletto
A quei che si diletta di sapere
Dall'alta Commedia vero intelletto,
Intendo in questi versi preferèrè
Quel che si voglia intender per li nomi
Di quei che fan la dritta via vedere,
Di quest' autor ch' è gloriosi ponci
Solia cercar, e gustar si vivendo
Che sapesse de' morti tutti i domi.*"

"That there may be more fruit and more delight
To those whose joy is to gain wisdom true
From the true meaning of that Comedy,
I purpose in these verses to disclose
What by the various names is signified,
Of those who ope the true way to our sight,
Of that great author who was wont to seek
The glorious fruits, and taste them with such zest,
That all the mansions of the dead he knew."

—Edit. of Dante, Padua, 1822.

and Beatrice. He recognises that the object of the *Inferno* is to "help those who are now living to escape from their misery by abandoning their sins;" of the *Purgatorio*, to "lead them back to virtue;" of the *Paradiso*, to "lead them on to glory."

The most interesting of all contemporary testimonies is, it seems to me, that found in the *Chronicles* of Giovanni Villani (*d.* 1348). He had been Dante's neighbour in Florence, and had been with him at the Jubilee in Rome. He gives a brief biography, mentions his studies at Bologna and Paris, his travels in many parts of the world. He gives a list of all his chief works, praises him as accomplished in every science, though a layman, as a supreme poet and philosopher. His style is more pure and polished than had ever been known before in Italian literature. The *Commedia* gives evidence of a profoundly subtle intellect, though at times he indulges over largely in invective, and his character was not without the failings of scorn and anger. He would not willingly converse with those who were not scholars, but in spite of these failings he was worthy of perpetual honour. For Villani, Dante had clearly become one of the great names of Florence (*ix.* 136).¹

The next step in the *Catena* brings before us the two illustrious names of Boccaccio and Petrarch. The former (*d.* 1375) was acquainted with the poet's nephew, Andrea Poggi, and from him derived much of the material for his life of Dante. He gave a practical proof of his affection for his memory by obtaining in 1350 a grant of ten gold florins for his daughter, who was then, as she had been during the later years of her father's life, a nun in the Convent of San Stefano dell' Oliva at Ravenna. In 1373, at the request of the authorities of Florence, he undertook the work of a public lecturer on the *Commedia*, and his expositions were given on Sundays in the Duomo. He did not, however, get beyond the sixteenth canto of the *Inferno*. From Boccaccio we have a detailed description of Dante's personal appearance and habits of life. He was of middle height, stooped somewhat, but moved in a dignified and courteous manner, was always dressed becomingly in garments suited to his age. His face was long, his nose aquiline, his eyes rather large, his cheeks full, his lower lip

¹ Dino Compagni, while he dwells on the genius of Guido Cavalcanti, only names Dante as having been one of the envoys of Florence at Rome. It may be a question whether the fact tells for or against the authenticity of the History that bears his name.

slightly projecting beyond the upper. His complexion was dark, his hair black and crisp. His manner was calm and dignified and polished. He showed a singular moderation in his eating and drinking. He seldom spoke unless spoken to, and then gravely and thoughtfully; but when occasion called for it, he showed that he had the gift of eloquent and fervid speech. We must add that, as might perhaps be expected from the author of the *Decameron*, Boccaccio sees in Dante one who was not free from sensual vices, and describes him as "*molto dedito alla lussuria*."¹

In yet another way Boccaccio showed his reverence for him of whom he was wont to speak as the "*divino poeta*." He found that Petrarch had deliberately held aloof from the *Commedia* through fear of losing his originality if he came under the spell of so great a master (*Ferr. M. D.* ii. 441). It was not till 1359 that Boccaccio, having written out the whole poem in his own hand, sent it to his friend and prevailed on him to read it.² Petrarch recognised him as the prince of Italian poets who had written in their own tongue, possibly comforting himself with the thought that his own *Africa* was more sure of immortality, and acknowledged that the subtle and profound conceptions of the *Commedia* "could not have been written without the special gift of the Holy Spirit."³ A MS. in the Palatine collection at Florence (Cod. 180) containing marginal notes on *Par.* x.—xxx. is ascribed by its editor, Palermo, to the hand of Petrarch. Meantime the work of commenting and lecturing went on. Professorial chairs for lectures on the *Commedia* were founded at Bologna, at Ferrara, and at Milan. In the first of these cities the lecturer in 1375 was Benvenuto Ramboldi da Imola (*d.* 1399), who afterwards, in 1378, reduced his expositions to the form of a Latin commentary.⁴ The work was

¹ The description is reproduced by Benv. da Imola in his notes on *H.* ii., with the addition of the words, "*facie semper melancolicus, meditabundus, speculativus*."

² The MS. is now in the Vatican as Cod. N. 3199.

³ Benv. (Notes on *H.* ii.) quotes from a letter of Petrarch's to Boccaccio, "*Magna mihi de ingenio ejus opinio est potuisse cum omnia quibus intendisset*."

⁴ Till the present year (1887) the commentary of Benvenuto has been known only (1) through extracts printed by Muratori (vol. i.), and (2) through an Italian translation by Tamburini. The publication of the original Latin text was contemplated by Lord Vernon as one of his magnificent contributions to Dante literature, and he had the Florence MS. transcribed for that purpose. It has since been carried into execution by his son, the Hon. William Warren Vernon, under the editorship of Sir James Lacaita, and is now published by Barbera, Florence. Benvenuto was the intimate friend of Boccaccio, of whom he always speaks as his beloved master. His reverence for Dante is profound. He speaks of him as the sun that had risen on the darkness of Italy, wrote Latin verses in his honour, and touchingly says, in a note on *Par.* xxvi. 3, that his own experience as a commentator had been like that which the author there describes.

carried on by Francesco da Buti (*d.* 1406), to whose memory a tomb still stands in the cloister of the Franciscan Convent at Pisa.

Meantime the fame of the Florentine poet had been spreading in other ways. The rising art of Italy found in the *Commedia* a wide choice of subjects. Cornelius's judgment¹ that Italian art has been strong and vigorous in proportion as it has worked under Dante's influence, and that it became weak and sensuous as that influence declined, was verified from the first. Giotto's portrait of Dante in the Bargello Chapel, painted probably about 1300, was indeed the first visible recognition of Dante's rising fame; and the picture of the *Inferno* in the same chapel, with its figure of the three-headed Lucifer with a sinner between each pair of jaws, was a manifest reproduction of *H.* xxxiv. The Assisi frescoes of the history of St. Francis, the prominence given to the marriage of the Saint with Poverty (*Par.* xi. 38), the introduction of the Centaur as the symbol of sensuality (*H.* xii. 56), are all thoroughly Dantesque in character, and may well be thought of as executed, directly or indirectly, under the influence of the author of the *Commedia*. What has been said of Giotto holds good in yet higher measure of Andrea Orcagna (*b.* 1329, *d.* 1389), of whom it is recorded that he was a devout student and admirer of Dante (*Lindsay*, ii. 220). If the frescoes of the Last Judgment in the Campo Santo of Pisa, of Paradise and Hell in S. Maria Novella at Florence, are not absolutely illustrations of the *Commedia*, they at least reproduce much of its leading imagery. As the work became more widely known through the printed copies which were issued in rapid succession from the *editio princeps* of Foligno (1472) onwards, it attracted yet more the notice of the artists of more enterprising genius. In Sandro Botticelli (*b.* 1446, *d.* 1510) we have one whose mind fed on Dante till it was interpenetrated with his mind and emotions (*Vasari, Life of Botticelli*), of all artists perhaps the one in most entire sympathy with him;² and he aimed at nothing less than a complete illustration of the whole poem.³

¹ Grimm, H., *Life of Michael Angelo*, ii. 71.

² So Ruskin (*Fors Clav.* xxii.) says of Botticelli that he was "the only painter of Italy who thoroughly felt and understood Dante." It is worth noting that he was one of the artists who came under the influence of Savonarola.

³ The drawings, eighty-three in number (*H.* i.-vi. and ix.-xv. are wanting), are found in a MS. of the *Commedia* which was bought by the Prussian Government at the sale of the Duke of Hamilton's library in 1882, and has since been published by the directors of the Royal Museum at Berlin under the editorship of Friedrich Lippmann. The drawings appear to

It will be admitted by all who have seen these illustrations that in their tenderness, their simplicity, the fulness of their mystic symbolism, they are worthy of their subject. A work of even greater significance, as being more public and more permanent, is found in the paintings in the chapel of the south transept of the Cathedral of Orvieto by Luca Signorelli (b. 1439, d. 1521). He introduces Dante's portrait¹ into his painting of the Antichrist, as turning a deaf ear to his proclamation. He follows Dante's selection in his choice of figures for the *Doctorum Sapiens Ordo*. Charon appears as ferryman in his representation of Hell, and Minos is there as judge (*H. v. 4*). Dante is seen again in company with Homer and Virgil, and his head crowned with the poet's wreath of laurel (*H. iv. 101*). A series of medallions represent well-nigh every stage in the ascent of the Mount of Purgatory.²

Another artistic recognition of Dante's work worthy of record is found in the portrait in the Duomo of Florence ascribed for many years to Andrea Orcagna, but now recognised as by Domenico di Michelino. It stands over the place from which Boccaccio and his followers had delivered their expositions, near the side-door of the north aisle, and is said to have replaced in 1465 an older picture that was either unsatisfying or had decayed. It represents the poet with the familiar dress and features which reproduce alike the Bargello portrait and the plaster cast of Ravenna. He stands crowned with laurel and with an open volume in his hand. On his left are the Duomo and the towers of Florence. With his right hand he points to the gate of Hell. Behind him rises the Mount of Purgatory, presenting the Angel of Penitence seated above the three steps that lead to the entrance, and with the cornices on which the seven mortal sins are expiated and blotted out. Above him shine the stars which Dante loved as signs of hope for himself and for mankind. Below there is an inscription which is, I think, worth copying, as showing how the Florentines then looked on the man whose name a century and a half before had stood on their registers as condemned to the penalty of exile

have been made for a member of the Medici family. An edition with nineteen engravings by Botticelli, illustrating *H. i.-xix.*, and with Landino's *Commentary*, was published at Florence in 1478, and is now in the British Museum Library.

¹ Another portrait by the same artist, where the poet is at his desk, has just been published by the Arundel Society. The *D. Gesell.* (vol. ii.) reproduce a striking engraving in the Munich Gallery of a portrait ascribed to Masaccio or Ghirlandajo.

² J. L. Bevir, *Visitor's Guide to Orvieto*, 1884.

on the charge of official corruption, with the threat of being burnt alive if he ever crossed the frontier.

*" Qui cælum cecinit, mediumque imumque tribunal
Lustravitque animo cuncta poeta suo,
Doctus adest Dantes, sua quem Florentia sæpe
Sensit consiliis ac pietate patrem.
Nil potuit tanto mors sæva nocere poetæ
Quem vivum virtus, carmen, imago facit."*

*" Who sang of Heaven, and of the regions twain,
Midway and in the abyss, where souls are judged,
Surveying all in spirit, he is here,
Dante, our master-poet. Florence found
Oft-times in him a father, wise and strong
In his devotion. Death could bring no harm
To such a bard. For him true life have gained
His worth, his verse, and this his effigy."*

It may well be said, when we compare this language with that of the decree which condemned him to exile, that never in the history of any people was there a more complete act of amnesty and recantation.

The art of Italy, however, culminated in Buonarroti and in Sanzio; and here also Cornelius's law holds good. The former, when it was in contemplation to remove Dante's remains from Ravenna to Florence, offered to design a monument for him. Among the lost treasures of the world we may well note the designs which Michael Angelo had sketched to illustrate the *Commedia*, and which perished in the wreck of the ship which was freighted with them in the Gulf of Genoa. As it is, in the Last Judgment in the Sistine Chapel, with its Charon ferryboat and the form of the Herculean Christ, which represents, not the tradition of Italian art, but the "*Sommo Giove*" of *Purg.* vi. 118, we have a sufficient proof of the influence which Dante exercised over his mind. Buonarroti, however, was a poet as well as a painter, architect, and sculptor, and he has left two sonnets (*S.* 31, 32) which are among the earliest poetical tributes in Italian to the poet's memory after Dante's own age, and which for that reason, and on account of their intrinsic worth, as embodying the thoughts of the great artist as to the great poet, I have ventured to translate.¹

¹ I may perhaps be allowed to disclaim the translation of the first of these sonnets in Father Bowden's edition of Hettinger's work on Dante, which has been ascribed to me in error.

MICHAEL ANGELO ON DANTE.

I.

Into the dark abyss he made his way ;
 Both nether worlds he saw, and in the might
 Of his great soul beheld God's splendour bright,
 And gave to us on earth true light of day :
 Star of supremest worth with his clear ray,
 Heaven's secrets he revealed to our dim sight,
 And had for guerdon what the base world's spite
 Oft gives to souls that noblest grace display.
 Full ill was Dante's life-work understood,
 His purpose high, by that ungrateful state,
 That welcomed all with kindness but the good.
 Would I were such, to bear like evil fate,
 To taste his exile, share his lofty mood !
 For this I'd gladly give all earth calls great.

II.

What should be said of him speech may not tell ;
 His splendour is too great for men's dim sight ;
 And easier 'twere to blame his foes aright
 Than for his poorest gifts to praise him well.
 He tracked the path that leads to depth of Hell,
 To teach us wisdom, scaled the eternal height,
 And Heaven with open gates did him invite,
 Who in his own loved city might not dwell.
 Ungrateful country, step-dame of his fate,
 To her own loss : full proof we have in this
 That souls most perfect bear the greatest woe.
 Of thousand things suffice it this to state :
 No exile ever was unjust as his,
 Nor did the world his equal ever know.

Of Raphael it may be enough to state that Dante is represented by him in his twofold character as poet and as theologian. In the bright sunny clearness of Apollo and the Muses on Parnassus (was the painter thinking of *Par.* i. 13-36 ?), in the graver company of the Doctors of the Church who are gathered in the *Disputa*, his form is that which most attracts the spectator's eye and lingers longest in his memory.

I have, for the sake of continuity, carried on this brief survey of Italian art in relation to Dante from the generation which was contemporary with him to the crowning glories of the Renaissance. I return to the more distinctly literary labours of which he formed

the subject. Of these, the more conspicuous facts to which I must confine myself are: (1) the immense multiplication of MS. copies of his works, chiefly, of course, of the *Commedia*, before the invention of printing, so that they are found in well-nigh every library in Europe; (2) to the ever-increasing crowd of commentators, among whom Castelvetro¹ and Ricaldone have been only recently made accessible to the public; (3) to the tendency, obviously growing out of the European reputation which the name had gained, to make a Latin translation of the *Commedia*, partly perhaps to meet an actual demand, partly with the benevolent intention (reminding us of Joannes de Virgilio) of making the poem better known to scholars by presenting it in the universal language. Of these, the most conspicuous is that by Giovanni da Serravalle, Bishop of Rimini, of which, for what seems to me sufficient reasons, I speak more fully in connexion with Dante's fame in England.²

I am not writing a history of Dantean bibliography, and must refer my readers for fuller details to the exhaustive work of Colomb de Batines, the more accessible stores of Ferrazzi's *Manuale Dantesco*, or the Dante Catalogue published by the British Museum in the present year; but it is at least worth noting that the *editio princeps*, of which a copy is now in the British Museum, was printed by a German, Neumeister, at Foligno in 1472; another was also printed by two "*Teutonici*," helped by a printer of Verona, in the same year; that the term "*Divina Commedia*" first appears in a Venice edition of 1554, and with scarcely an exception became the normal title-page; that between 1472 and 1596 not fewer than seventy-eight editions are known to have been published.

Soon, however, there came a change for the worse over the mind of Italy. First the influence of the Renaissance and then of the reaction of the Jesuits against the Renaissance—a reaction not incompatible with their borrowing many of its outward features in art and literature—turned the thoughts of men into altogether a different channel. The Dante chairs of the fourteenth century

¹ The commentary of Castelvetro, which includes only *H. i.*–xxix., was written in the fifteenth century, but was not published till 1886. Ricaldone's, embracing the whole *Commedia*, was published also by the King of Italy in the same year, and dedicated to his heir. The writer lived in the fifteenth century.

² Others may be named, by the Abbate dalla Piazza, Ricordo, a Carmelite, Paolo Nicoletto, a Venetian, Andreas, a Neapolitan. Penrose, *Lives and Writings of Dante and Petrarch*.

collapsed or were suppressed in the fifteenth. Guicciardini (*d.* 1540) says that he found great difficulty in obtaining a copy of the *Commedia*. The semi-paganism, the dilettante scholarship of the men who gathered at the table of Lorenzo de' Medici¹ for their feast of reason and flow of soul, looked with distaste on the stern masculine dogmatism of Dante's great work. They preferred to concentrate their energies on the various readings of Greek MSS., on medals and cameos, on the dreams of Plato and the Platonists. I find no tribute to Dante recorded as coming from the pen of Politian or Marsilio Ficino, or Ludovico Vives or Pico di Mirandola. It is significant that even in the history of Savonarola, whose character, as a preacher of repentance, would seem more in harmony with the strong faith and earnestness of the poet, there is no passing allusion to the language of the *Commedia* on the social extravagances of the women of Florence (*Purg.* xxiii. 94-108), which might almost have been cited as prophecies of the preaching of the Friar of St. Mark's. The one solitary fact in the record with which Dante's name is connected is that his great-grandson, also a Dante Alighieri, was exempted in 1495 from the payment of a tax on the ground that the magistrates "thought it well to show some gratitude to the descendant of the poet who was so great an ornament to the city."² This, and the wish of the Florentines, already mentioned, to have the sepulchre of their poet among them, were the last surviving tokens of the old Dante enthusiasm. One memorable exception has, however, to be noticed. Tasso (*b.* 1544, *d.* 1595) bore his witness that he looked on Dante as the prince of Italian poets, and wrote copious notes on the *Commedia*. These were published in 1830 by Rosini.³

¹ Lorenzo himself does indeed make a passing mention of Dante's name, and a sentence or two will suffice to show the adequacy of his tribute. "If we look into the *Commedia* of Dante, we shall find theological and natural subjects treated with the greatest ease and address. We shall there discover the three species of composition so highly commended in oratory—the simple, the middle style, and the sublime" (*Roscoe, Lor. de Med.*, p. 127, ed. Bohn).

² Clark, W. R., *Life of Savonarola*, p. 209. I am indebted to Mr. R. Garnett of the British Museum for some interesting facts connected with a contemporary of Savonarola's, Paolo Attavanti of the Order of the Holy Ghost. In 1479 he printed a "*Quadragesimale* (Lent Sermons) *de reditu peccatoris ad Dominum*." In this volume he quotes frequently from Dante as "*divinus poeta noster*," almost as a man might quote from a father of the Church, describes the topography of the *Inferno*, and quotes *Par.* iii. as showing "*virtutum et effectum caritatis transformantis hominem in Deum*" (*fol.* 226 r.) He mentions that he has written a commentary on the *Commedia*. It is not known to be extant.

³ Machiavelli ought also to be named as an exception (see extract from *Il'egle* farther on).

With the Jesuits, who took the guidance of the later Renaissance, and finally tamed it to be their instrument, there was probably a combination of deliberate purpose and instinctive distaste. They aspired to be the masters of the education of Western Europe, and they made that education predominantly classical. Their taste was offended by what seemed to them the semi-barbarous element of the *Commedia*. They instinctively felt that minds trained in the school of Dante were not likely to be pliant and subservient, as they wished their tools to be. They saw, as clearly as John XXII. had done, that the Ghibelline theory of the *De Monarchiâ* was incompatible with their development of the Guelph theory, with Papal infallibility, with the power claimed for the Pope as supreme ruler of the sovereigns and states of Europe. And so where they could they systematically decried him, as when Venturi the Jesuit commentator, dwells on the many faults, the daring impiety of the *Commedia*; or they damned him with faint praise, as Tiraboschi, also a Jesuit, does in the few lines assigned to Dante in his *History of Italian Literature* (*Edinb. Rev.* xxix.)

It is significant, in connexion with what we have seen already, that the first editor (Lombardi), who writes with something of the fervour which had marked the earlier commentators, was a Franciscan, not a Jesuit. Bellarmine, with a sagacity which anticipated the action of later leaders of thought in the Latin Church, deemed it better to claim Dante as a witness on his side rather than to denounce him as a heretic or reformer. On the whole, however, the conspiracy of silence and the degeneracy of the Italian character, under the combined influence of the Renaissance and the Jesuit reaction, did their work effectually. It ceased to be a profitable venture to publish the *Commedia*, and but five editions appear, "*rari nantes in gurgite vasto*," between 1596 and 1732.¹

The opening of the eighteenth century represents the nadir of the prophet's fame in his own country and in his father's house. Here we may pause for a while, and return hereafter to trace its revival, and the effects of that revival on the character, the art, and the literature of Italy.

Mr. R. Garnett suggests that the *Divine Tragedy* of Bernardino Ochino, of which an English translation was published in 1549, shows traces of Dante's influence. Milton, he is convinced, took hints from it.

¹ The British Museum Catalogue gives Vicenza, 1613; Padua, 1629; Naples, 1716; Padua, 1726; Lucca, 1732.

II.

ENGLAND.

It is not without a certain sense of satisfaction that we note the fact that the earliest and fullest appreciative welcome given to the great poet of Italy came from the first, in order of time, of the great poets of England. The welcome so given is all the more remarkable from the contrast between the characters and the works of the two writers. It is scarcely possible to imagine a greater unlikeness in literature than that between the dreamy yet passionate idealist of the *Commedia*, never losing his self-consciousness, subjective to the last degree of subjectivity, and the healthy objective geniality of Chaucer, sympathising with all forms of human character, sensual and spiritual, humorous rather than enthusiastic, anticipating, almost or altogether, the all-embracing humanity of Shakespeare. The relation of the two in order of time is not without significance. Dante died in exile in 1321, Chaucer was born in 1328. Yet by the time the latter had grown up to manhood the fame of the former was recognised not in his own country, in which, while he lived, he was almost as a prophet without honour, but had reached the "*extremi Britanni*," whom, as we have seen, he had probably visited in his earlier manhood. In 1373, Boccaccio, then at the age of sixty, was appointed to lecture on the *Commedia* at Florence; but Chaucer's acquaintance with Dante's writings must have begun at an earlier date, and was probably, as we shall see, traceable rather to Petrarch than to the author of the *Decamerone*, from whom he borrowed largely in his *Canterbury Tales*. That he, an English gentleman, filling this or that office in the court of Edward III., should thus have known the three great names in the Italian literature of the time, shows that there was a more real fraternisation between the men of letters of the two countries than has been common since. It was partly perhaps consequent on the intercourse of England with the Papal See, and the frequent missions from one court to the other; partly also on the habits of the university life of the time, which led Italian students to come to Oxford and Cambridge, and English students to visit Bologna and Padua.¹ When

¹ *E.g.*, Francesco d'Accorso (*H.* xv. 110, n.) had for several years lectured on the Canon Law at Oxford.

Chaucer was chosen in 1368 as an envoy to Genoa, it was probably because he was already known to possess some acquaintance with the language and literature of the people to whom he was dispatched. The mission to which he was thus appointed was connected with the marriage of Lionel, Duke of Clarence, the third son of Edward III., with Violante, the daughter of the Duke of Milan, at which Petrarch was present. To this intercourse with the Italian poet Chaucer refers his knowledge of the tale of Griseldis:—

“ I wol tell you a tale, which that I
 Lerned at Padowe of a worthy clerk
 As preved by his wordes and his werk.

 Fraunceis Petrarke, the laureat poete,
 Highte this clerke, whose rhetorike swete
 Enlumined all Itaille of poetry.”

—*The Clerke's Tale, Prol.*

It is a legitimate inference that it was through this converse with Petrarch that Chaucer became acquainted with the *Decamerone* of Boccaccio, of which he afterwards made such full use in the *Canterbury Tales*, and with Dante. The MS. of Dante's works which he brought back with him may reasonably be looked on as the first copy that had found its way to England. Chaucer at all events was not slow to recognise the greatness of the poet whose life and character presented so vivid a contrast to his own.

Thus we find in the *Prologue* to the *Legend of Good Women*, written probably in 1382—

“ Envie is lauender¹ of the court alway,
 For she ne parteth, neither night nor day,
 Out of the house of Cæsar, thus saith Dant.”

where we have a manifest reference to *H.* xiii. 64. So again in the *House of Fame* (i. 453-458) he speaks of Æneas:—

“ And eueriche tourment eke in Hell
 Saw he, which long is for to tell,
 Which paines whoso lists to know
 He must rede many a row
 In Virgile or in Claudian,
 Or Dante, that it tellen can.”

In the *Canterbury Tales*, belonging to the period of completed

¹ Lauender = laundry-maid, and used by Chaucer as an euphemistic equivalent of Dante's “*meretrice*.”

culture in Chaucer's life, the quotations are, as might be expected, more numerous. Thus in the *Wife of Bath's Tale* we have (l. 6708)—

“ Wel can the wise poet of Florence,
That highte Dante, spoken of this sentence.”

The sentence in question is that true “gentillesse” depends not on lineage, but on character; and on this theme Chaucer moralises for some forty lines, in words which are simply a paraphrase partly of *Purg.* vii. 121–122, and partly of the *Canzone* (*Canz.* xvi. in this volume) which opens with

“ *Le dolci rime d'amor, ch' io soleva.*

The *Frere's Tale* gives a passing humorous allusion. The foul fiend appears to a sompnour, and answers his questions as to the infernal world with the mocking promise that before long

“ Thou shalt, by thine own experience,
Conne in a chaire read of this sentence
Bet than Virgile, while he was on live,
Or Dante also.”

In the *Monke's Tale* (*C. T.* xiv. 700–772) we have a more elaborate attempt to introduce Dante to the notice of English readers. The tragedy of Ugolino had impressed itself in its unspeakable horror and terrible simplicity on Chaucer's mind, and he gives a condensed rendering of it, passing from the first person, in which Dante makes Ugolino tell his own story, to the third. At the close we read:—

“ Whoso wol hear it in a longer wise,
Redeth the grete poete of Itaille,
That mighty Dante, for he can it devise,
From point to point, not o word will he faille.”

Nor was Chaucer's knowledge of the *Commedia* limited to the *Inferno*. His translation of the magnificent *Hymn to the Virgin* in *Par.* xxxiii. 1–27 shows that he had studied the whole poem. I give the first verse:—

“ Thou maide and mother, doughter of thy Son,
Thou well of mercy, sinful soules' cure,
In whom that God of bounty chus to won;
Thou humble and high ower every creature,

Thou nobledest so fer forth our nature
 That no deadain the Maker had of kinde
 His Son in blood and fleshe to clothe and winde."

—*Second Nonnes Tale, Prol.*

Enough has been said to show that it was through our morning-star of poetry that Dante, as the Italian dayspring from on high, first came within the ken of English readers. Other facts testifying to a like appreciation in the same period of English history may be briefly noted. Gower, Chaucer's friend (*b.* 1320, *d.* 1402), mentions "Dante the poete" in the text of the *Conf. Amant.* (vii. 154), and explains in a marginal note that he was a poet of Italy. Lydgate (*b.* 1375, *d.* 1460) in his *Fall of Princes* speaks of Dante as "of Florence the laureate poete, demure of loke, fulfilled with patience," almost as if he had seen the Bargello portrait, and mentions the three parts of the *Commedia*. In 1416 we have the noticeable fact that two English bishops, Nicolas Bubwith of Bath and Wells and Robert Hallam of Salisbury, while attending the Council of Constance, requested Giovanni da Serravalle, Bishop of Rimini, to translate the *Commedia* into Latin with an explanatory comment, a task which the good Bishop, obviously a warm Dantophilist, readily undertook, and completed within fourteen months.¹ The English prelates may have been led only by Dante's general reputation to desire a fuller acquaintance with his writings. They may have read of him in Chaucer or in Gower. But it is just as probable that they may have inherited the English traditions of Dante's presence in London and Oxford. In the case of the former of the two, there may have been some links of directly local association (*Par.* x. 139-148, *n.*) It is just as likely, at all events, that Serravalle reported Dante's visit to England and studies at Oxford on the strength of what they told him, as that he invented the story, as sceptical critics have surmised, in order to please his English friends. It may be noted, lastly, that, like so many of the early Dantophilists, he was of the Franciscan Order. Another witness to the honour in which Dante's name was held in England is found in the fact that the library of Duke Humphrey

¹ The translation has never been printed, but the MS., after many vicissitudes, was purchased by the British Museum in 1885. It will be remembered that it is to Serravalle that we owe the statement that Dante studied at Oxford and was examined for his degree in Paris. Hallam was Chancellor of Oxford (1403-6), and attended the Council of Pisa in 1408. Bubwith also was probably educated there (*Lytte*, p. 316). Either of the two bishops may have known Chaucer (*d.* 1400) personally, as they were much about the court.

of Gloucester (*d.* 1447), which he gave to the University of Oxford, contained two volumes of his works.¹ A little later on, John Gunthorpe, afterwards Dean of Wells (*d.* 1498), went with two other students of Oxford to study with Guarini, the famous scholar of Ferrara, and on his return brought with him a large number of Italian and other MSS., which he left to the libraries of the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge (Warton, *H. P.* ii 555).² In the early poetry of the Tudor period, with which Gunthorpe forms a connecting link, Petrarch had perhaps a more commanding influence—as seen in the sonnets of Wyatt and Lord Surrey—than Dante; but the latter writes his *Restless State of a Lover* in *terza rima*, and Puttenham in his *Art of Poesie* (i. 31) names both these writers as having studied also in the school of the author of the *Commedia*. In Sackville's *Induction* we have a vision of Hell which shows distinct traces of his influence. In 1550 William Thomas, author of a defence of Henry VIII., written in Italian, published his *Principal Rules of the Italian Grammar, with a Dictionare for the better understanding of Boccace, Petrarche, and Dante*, and so supplies evidence that the last-named poet commanded the attention of English students aiming at literary culture. Among those students we may name as the foremost in fame Sir Philip Sidney. His language is sufficiently appreciative. It forms part of his *Defence of Poesy* that “in the Italian language the first that made it to be a treasure-house of science were the poets Dante, Boccace, and Petrarch.” Towards the close of his book he promises a great reward to those who will no longer scorn the sacred mysteries of poetry (p. 87, edit. 1831). “Thus doing, your names shall flourish in the printers’ shops: thus doing, you shall be of kin to many a poetical preface. You shall be most fair, most rich, most wise, most all: you shall dwell upon superlatives: your soul shall be placed *with Dante’s Beatrice* and Virgil’s Anchises.”

The poet that was thus a familiar name to Sidney was not likely to be altogether unknown to Spenser. The parallelism between his *Letter to Sir W. Raleigh* and Dante’s *Epistle to Can Grande* has been already pointed out (p. 358), and, looking to the fulness with which the theory of an allegory of many meanings is worked

¹ *Lyte*, p. 321. We are not told what the works were.

² I have not been able to ascertain as yet whether these books included Dante.

out, may be more than an undesigned coincidence. The structure and style of the *Faerie Queene* are, however, based upon Tasso rather than Dante; nor can I find in Spenser's works any instances of reproduction or allusive references sufficient to show that he had studied Dante, unless it be in the mention of the "sad Florentine" in the *Visions of Bellay* (v. 13), and in that case I must confess that I am unable to determine to what passage in Dante the line alludes, though *Purg.* ii. 41-45 suggests itself as possible. The parallelisms indicated by Todd in his edition of Spenser (iii. 57, iii. 63, iv. 310) seem to me quite insufficient to prove that the author of the *Faerie Queene* borrowed from Dante.

The question whether we can trace any reminiscences of Dante in the poet whose name stands with his as one of the goodly company of the great master-spirits of the world, "poets not for an age, but for all time," is one which I, with most others, should be disposed to answer in the negative. The opposite view has, however, been maintained with so much ingenuity by a writer obviously profoundly intimate with both, that at least a passing notice of his theory may legitimately find a place here. In two articles in *Blackwood's Magazine* (June 1884, June 1885), under the heading of *New Views of Shakespeare's Sonnets*, the writer works out elaborately the conclusion to which he has been led, that the "other poet" of *Sonnets* lxxix., lxxx., lxxxv., lxxxvi., is none other than Dante, and that the spirit who teaches that poet, the "familiar ghost" who "nightly gulls him with intelligence" is none other than the ideal Beatrice. The writer finds in the *Vita Nuova* the key to the yet unsolved mystery of Shakespeare's Sonnets, the later poet embodying Wisdom and Holiness in a masculine ideal of beauty, as the earlier had done in a feminine ideal. To him Dante, and St. Augustine, as Dante's master, are Shakespeare's greatest teachers.

I cannot say, with all my desire—a desire perhaps carried sometimes to excess—to find traces of Dante wherever there is any possibility of finding them, that I have risen from the study of these papers, interesting and suggestive as they are, with even the shadow of conviction. I do not find in Shakespeare's "sugared sonnets" the tone of the *Vita Nuova*. I find no evidence that Shakespeare knew enough Italian to read Dante in the original, and as yet there was no English version of any of his writings

accessible.¹ Admitting, as probable enough, that Shakespeare may have heard of him through Sidney or Spenser or other men of letters among those with whom he lived, there would have been, I conceive, had there been any indebtedness of thought, a more direct recognition than a few incidental parallelisms, which might well be undesigned and unconscious.

In passing from the Tudor to the Stuart period of English literature, the most conspicuous instance of acquaintance with the *Commedia* which has come under my notice is found in the *Religio Medici* of Sir Thomas Browne (*b.* 1605, *d.* 1682). "Dante's characters," he remarks, speaking of the *OMO* of *Purg.* xxiii. 31, "are to be found in skulls as well as faces" (*p.* 204). He speaks of the "fabulous Hell" of Dante, wherein Plato and Socrates find a place (*H.* iv. 134), whilst "Cato is to be found in no lower place than Purgatory" (*Purg.* i. 73), and notes that Epicurus "lies deep in Dante's Hell" (*H.* x. 14) for his denial of immortality (*pp.* 215, 216, *ed.* 1831).

The scholar-poet of the next generation, of whom also we may say that he was numbered "equalled in fame" with Dante, who travelled in Italy, and knew Galileo, and wrote Italian sonnets, was, we know, attracted by the fame of his great predecessor. Two passages meet us, which, though familiar enough, may well be quoted. In the sonnet to Mr. Henry Lawes we have the tribute of well-nigh the greatest of English poets to the greatest of Italian:—

"Dante shall give Fame leave to set thee higher
Than his Casella, whom he woo'd to sing,
Met in the milder shades of Purgatory."

In his *Reformation in England* he strengthens his case against Prelacy by quoting from *H.* xix. 115:—

"Ah Constantine! of how much ill was cause
Not thy conversion, but those rich domains
That the first wealthy Pope received of thee!"

It is not without interest to note that one at least of the great theologians of the English Church in the seventeenth century was also a student of the *Commedia*. Jeremy Taylor, in his *Life of Christ* (*Disc.* xiv.), treating of the Gospel works of healing, writes:

¹ It is perhaps possible that Grangier's translation (1596) may have made the *Commedia* known to English men of letters, who read French but not Italian. The first Italian edition of the *Vita Nuova* was printed at Florence in 1576.

"The miracles were wholly an effect of Divine Power, for Nature did not at all co-operate; or, that I may use the elegant expression of Dante, it was such

*a cui Natura
Non scaldò ferro mai, nè battè ancude,"*
(*Par.* xxiv. 101),

for which Nature did never heat the iron nor beat the anvil."

In the literature which followed on the Restoration, however, the form of Dante drops into the background. I do not find any allusion to Dante in the prose or verse of Dryden. Travellers like Robert Boyle and John Evelyn and Addison sojourn in Florence and Ravenna, and his name is conspicuous by its absence. It is a natural inference from their silence that the men of letters with whom they came in contact had nothing to tell them of the *Commedia*; that the *ciceroni* who acted as their guides had no motive for showing them the birthplace or the sepulchre of Dante. Addison visits Ariosto's tomb at Ferrara, and reports that the gondoliers of Venice sang stanzas of Tasso, but does not even name the greater poet. In his series of papers on Milton in the *Spectator*, he compares him with Homer and Virgil, but not with Dante. The only trace of recognition is found in a *Sketch for a History of English Poetry* published in *Gray's Works* (ed. 1814), and said to have been in Pope's handwriting, which had found its way through Bishop Warburton to Gray's friend, Mason. In that sketch, Surrey, Wyatt, and Sidney are classified as belonging to the school of Petrarch; Sackville to that of Dante. In this case, however, the exception proves the rule. Alike in Italy and in England, not to speak of other parts of Europe where it was less known, it seemed as if the history of the *Commedia* was to furnish yet another instance of the transitoriness of human fame, the hollowness of the "bubble reputation."

III.

ITALY.

I have noted the poverty of the Italian press in its editions of Dante between 1596 and 1726. From that date there are symptoms of a recovery, at first slow and tentative, afterwards advancing

with an ever-accelerated velocity. Sixteen editions appear between 1726 and 1800; over a hundred between 1800 and the great Dante sex-centenary festival of 1865. Since then their name is legion, and the catalogue of a *Biblioteca Dantesca*, including commentaries, disputations, lectures, reviews, and pamphlets on points connected with his works, would fill a fair-sized octavo volume. Many influences were at work, towards the close of the eighteenth century and in the earlier years of the nineteenth, contributing to this result. The genius of Alfieri and Monti gave a more masculine and vigorous character to the literature of Italy than it had had since the days of Tasso. The passion of the former poet for the Countess of Albany might not unnaturally seem to him more or less closely parallel to that of Dante for Beatrice, and there would be a certain attraction of affinity drawing him to the study of the *Vita Nuova*, and afterwards of the *Commedia*. It was said of him that he thought himself a second Dante. The Dictionary of the *Accademia della Crusca* would attract attention to the works of him who had been almost the creator of the language as an instrument of literature, and had done so much to ennoble it. The impulse given to thought by the French Revolution, the uprising of men's minds in Italy as elsewhere against the Jesuit influence which had held them in bondage, later aspirations after national independence and unity, a profounder and more reverential study of the mediæval period of Italian history, all these were favourable to a revived interest in Dante as the great poet-prophet of the nation. That interest showed itself, as it was natural that it should do, in the region of biography. From Leonardi Bruno in 1672, no one had cared to write a life of Dante till 1727, when the work was taken in hand by Manetti. This was followed in 1759 by Pelli, who gathered with an exhaustive fulness all that could be brought together from the documents and traditions of the fourteenth century, by Chabanon in 1773, by Fabroni in 1803, Petroni in 1816, Orelli in 1822, Gamba in 1825, Blanco in 1834, Balbo in 1839, Missirini in 1840, Savelli in 1841, Torri in 1843.

Among those who took part in this revival, a prominent place must be assigned to those whose fate, as political exiles from their fatherland, brought them into a spiritual fellowship with the great Florentine. Ugo Foscolo (*b.* 1776, *d.* 1827), in his memorable *Discorso sul Testo di Dante* (1825), and yet more, perhaps, by his

articles on Dante in the *Edinburgh Review* (vols. xx. and xxix.), made the name of Dante more familiar than it had been to English men of letters. Gabriel Rossetti (*d.* 1854), in his *Spirito Anti-Papale* (1832) and his commentary on the *Inferno* (1827), startled men's minds by the boldness of his theory that the *Vita Nuova* was no record of the poet's love for a personal Beatrice, but a mystic cypher-writing of initiation into the mysteries of a Ghibelline sect; that the poet himself was not the devout dogmatist, the student of Aquinas that he claimed to be, but was throughout his great poem, as in his other works, carrying on a determined warfare, not only against the vices of individual popes, the corruptions of the Papal Curia, the degeneracy of the clergy and the monastic orders, but against the whole dogmatic system which was associated with them. Mazzini more legitimately looked to Dante as the prophet of Italian unity, the first of the great witnesses that Italy had, as a nation, a right to live, not broken up into a host of petty principalities, nor under the yoke of the stranger, but strong and mighty, taking its place among the great powers of Europe (*Works*, vol. iv., *Essay on Dante*).

Still more memorable as an instance of the influence of Dante during the present century on the master-minds of Italy is the reverence paid to him by Antonio Rosmini of Rovereto. In 1822, when he was but twenty-four, he studied the *Commedia* and the *De Monarchiâ* with profound interest, wrote many notes on them, and drew out the plan of an elaborate series which was to include: (1) The Architecture of the Dantean Universe; (2) The Political Philosophy of Dante; (3) His Moral Philosophy; (4) His Theology; (5) His Style. Of these, only the second portion has been published by Paolo Perez in the volume of *Pensieri e Dottrine* selected from Rosmini's works (*Intra.* 1873). The life of Rosmini led him to become a metaphysician and a saint, the reviver of the study of Aquinas, the founder of a religious order rather than a man of letters in the wider sense; but the occasional references to Dante in his writings show that he never lost his reverence for him as a great religious thinker. In spite of the attempts of Foscolo, Rossetti, and Mazzini to read the thoughts which they severally brought with them between the lines of the *Commedia*, he maintained throughout that Dante was a Christian and a Catholic as well as a devoted patriot. The writer of the

Five Wounds of the Church in the nineteenth century was probably well prepared to accept the stern judgment which the Florentine poet had passed on like corruptions in the thirteenth and fourteenth. It may be added, as not without interest for all students of Italian literature, that in the later years of his life Rosmini found in Manzoni one who shared his Dante studies. When the former died, the latter, who had been frequently with him in his last illness, looked round the room for some relic which he might keep as a memorial of his friend, and found a copy of the *Paradiso* which had been used by Rosmini during the last few days or weeks of his life (W. Lockhart, *Life of Rosmini*, ii. p. 85). Among those who, like Manzoni, were at once patriots and Catholics, one notes the name of Silvio Pellico (*d.* 1854), who had but two books during his imprisonment, the Bible and the *Commedia*.

The impulse thus given was furthered by incidents which roused the enthusiasm of the Italian people, as it became conscious of its life, of its union with the past, of a possible future that would realise the dream ideal of that past, to a new intensity. The discovery of the Bargello portrait in 1840 kindled a fresh enthusiasm in the minds of the Florentines, and indeed of all Italians. Florence could at last give outward expression to her reverence for her *sovrano poeta* in the monument in the Church of Santa Croce. The sex-centenary festival of the poet's birth in 1865 brought together the Dante-worshippers from all parts of Europe. An exhibition of Dante relics gave a new vividness to the distant past that had been fading away into the dim mists of memory, and men looked on the very entry of Dante's name in the *Matricole dell' Arte de' Medici e Speciali*; on the two decrees of Canti de' Gabrielli that drove him into exile and sentenced him, if he returned to Florence, to be burnt alive (1302); on the document appointing Boccaccio as the first lecturer on the *Commedia* (1373); on Michael Angelo's offer to design a worthy sepulchre for Dante in his native city. Events referred to in the *Commedia* became more living when men read the decree of the Commune of Siena ordering the erection of a church after the battle of Montaperti (*H.* xxxii. 81), or the register of the death of Pier delle Vigne from the record of the hospital at Pisa (*H.* xiii. 58), or the oath of the Podestà of Siena to destroy the palace of Provenzano Salvani (*Purg.* xi. 121), or the formal condemnation of Capocchio by the

Council of the same city (*H.* xxix. 136), or the Brief of Nicholas IV. condemning the murder of Ugolino and summoning the Archbishop Ruggieri to Rome to answer for his conduct (*H.* xxxiii. 14).¹ The sex-centenary festival was, as might be expected, abundantly fruitful in orations, letters, pamphlets, and poems of the panegyric type. Dantophilists of all countries came to keep the feast of the prophet who was at last honoured in his own country. The poets of other countries, *e.g.*, Tennyson, sent their tributary wreaths of verse.² The house of the poet's birth, the stone in the piazza where he used to sit, were identified. A marble monument, more worthy of the poet than that inside the church, was erected in the Piazza of Santa Croce. By a singular coincidence, Dante's burial-place became the starting-point of a new interest within a few days of the opening of the festival. The people of Ravenna, anxious to do their part in the great ceremonial which was to be solemnised in that city on June 24 and 25, determined to give a clearer view of the shrine that contained the poet's monument, and in the course of their operations the workmen on May 27 removed some stones in the wall of the north aisle of the Church of St. Francis. Their hammers fell after a few strokes upon the wooden cover of a chest. On the inner side of the cover were the words, "*DANTIS OSSA. Denuper revisa die 3^a Junii 1677.*" On the outer side was written, "*DANTIS OSSA, a me Frē Antonio Sānti hic posita Anno 1677, die 18 Octobris.*" The chest contained human bones and a few withered laurel leaves. It was natural to assume that thus the mortal remains of the great poet were once more brought to light. An examination of the bones by Professor Welcker, comparing them with extant descriptions of Dante's person, confirmed this conclusion. It followed of course that the sarcophagus in the Capella di Dante erected by Cardinal Valenti Gonzaga in

¹ See the Catalogue of the *Esposizione Dantesca*, Florence, 1865.

² I insert, by Lord Tennyson's and Messrs. Macmillans' kind permission, the lines referred to:—

TO DANTE.

WRITTEN AT REQUEST OF THE FLORENTINES.

" King, that hast reign'd six hundred years, and grown
In power, and ever growest ! since thine own
Fair Florence, honouring thy nativity—
Thy Florence now the crown of Italy,
Hath sought the tribute of a verse from me,
I, wearing but the garland of a day,
Cast at thy feet one flower that fades away."

1780 was a cenotaph. A note was found in a missal in the convent in the hand of a Fra Tommaso Marredi, dated August 1, 1780, stating that the sarcophagus had been opened and found empty.

What led, we ask, to this removal of these bones from their first resting-place to the position in which they were now found, and in which they had remained, hidden and unknown, since the middle of the seventeenth century? Had they been removed for the sake of safety when the Cardinal del Poggetto came (1327-34) to exhume the body of the writer whom John XXII. had condemned as a heretic, and to scatter his bones to the four winds of heaven? Were they hidden in 1519, when the leading men of Florence applied to Leo X. for leave to remove them to their own city, to be reinterred in the monument which Michael Angelo was to construct?

A closer examination of records of the last decades of the seventeenth century has led Witte and other experts to a different conclusion. It appears that in 1694 a dispute arose between the municipal authorities of Ravenna and those of the convent of St. Francis as to the right of asylum claimed by the latter in the case of a prisoner who had sought refuge in the chapel which contained the monument of Dante, and had been forcibly removed by the former. The magistrates contended that the chapel, as containing the bones of a heretic, had lost the privilege of asylum. The answer of the Friars was, not to deny the charge of heresy, but to plead that the bones of Dante were not in the chapel, and they appealed to an inscription in the chapel itself in confirmation of their statement. The magistrates gave way, and admitted that the Friars had made out their case.

It follows from this that the bones had been removed before 1694, and so we get a *terminus ad quem*. But an entry in the accounts of the convent for 1648 records the payment of three *lire* for plastering the *Capella di Dante*. At that time, therefore, the remains were probably in their original position, and so we get a *terminus a quo*. The solution which suggests itself is that between the two dates the Friars, looking to the ill repute into which Dante had fallen, and, anxious to maintain their privileges, had removed the bones, the presence of which seemed to desecrate the chapel. It is further on record that in 1660 the Friars removed

a number of old Roman sarcophagi, which had been placed in a portico of the church, as desecrating it. Some of these perished; others were transferred to the churchyard. Witte conjectures that Dante's bones were removed in this process of expurgation, and that some Friar in the Convent, as 'an Abdiel, "faithful found among the faithless" to the memory of Dante, gathered the bones which had thus been ejected, with the laurel leaves that had once crowned the poet's brows, and placed them where they would be free from the risk of further desecration, probably without the knowledge of his colleagues, and, when Antonio Santi was chancellor of the convent (he was elected in 1672), communicated his secret to him, and obtained from him, obviously with more or less secrecy, an official authentication of their genuineness. The history is, I think, worth telling, partly as illustrating, like the moralisings of the gravedigger in *Hamlet*, the vicissitudes of human things, partly as pointing to the nadir of Dante's reputation in the estimate of his fellow-countrymen, the discovery of that nadir synchronising, curiously enough, with the zenith of the Florentine sex-centenary.¹

The history of Dante literature in Italy since 1865 is sufficiently voluminous. I can only note as the most noteworthy contributions to a better estimate of the poet the exhaustive editions by Lubin and Scartazzini, and the sceptical criticisms of Bartoli in the volume of his *Storia della Letteratura Italiana* which he dedicates to Dante. The purely negative character of his work excludes it here from any further notice. Scartazzini's biography, as written in German, will find a place at a later stage in this history.

IV.

ENGLAND.

Among the earliest traces of the Dante revival in England I note the fact that in the latter half of the eighteenth he begins to find translators, and to a certain extent admirers. Hayley renders the first three cantos of the *Inferno* into *terza rima*,² and feels

¹ I have drawn my facts mainly from the article by Witte, *Dante's Gebeine in Ravenna* (*D. Gesell.*, i. pp. 62-71).

² I do not find the translation in Hayley's *Poetical Works* (6 vols. 1778), nor is it named in the *Dante Catalogue* of the British Museum Library.

apparently as if his boldness called for an *apologia*. He thought it seemly to sum up all that could be said in Dante's favour in the following lines:—

"The patient reader, to thy merit just,
With transport glows and shudders in disgust;
Thy failings sprang from thy disastrous time,
Thy stronger beauties from a soul sublime."

HAYLEY *On Epic Poetry* (Ep. iii. 117-120).

Even that tribute, however, was too much for the refined taste of Horace Walpole, and he dismisses the Florentine as lying outside the range of criticism. "If I could admire Dante, which, begging Mr. Hayley's pardon, I cannot."

I rescue from the *Gentleman's Magazine* (xl. 38) some lines by the Hon. Charles Yorke to his sister on her copying a portrait of Dante by Clovio. They are not without interest as showing that the name was becoming somewhat more familiar to travellers and literary amateurs:—

"See Dante, Petrarch, through the darkness strive,¹
And Giotto's pencil bids their forms survive.
Fair Beatrice's claims would lose their force,
No more her steps o'er Heaven direct his course:
To thee the bards would grant the nobler place,
And ask thy guidance through the realms of peace."

An honourable place among those who took part in the revival of Dante studies must be assigned to the *History of English Poetry* by Thomas Warton (*d.* 1790). In connexion with Sackville's *Induction* and its Descent into Hell he enters on an elaborate comparison with the *Commedia*, of which he gives, as far as the *Inferno* is concerned, a fairly full analysis. His criticism is, however, pre-eminently that of the eighteenth century. "The grossest improprieties of this poem discover an originality of invention, and its absurdities often border on sublimity." . . . "The ground-work of his *Hell* is classical, yet with many Gothic and barbarous innovations." In some of the torments of the damned he finds "disgusting fooleries." "He describes not dis-

¹ Possible evidence that the walls of the Bargello Chapel had not yet been white-washed; but another portrait (that of Michelino?) seems to have passed as Giotto's: even Carlyle writes of Giotto's portrait before the discovery in the Bargello (*Lectures on Dante in Heroes and Hero-Worship*).

agreeably the first region which he traverses after leaving Hell. . . . The truth is, Dante's poem is a satirical history of his own time."

As the *Commedia* thus became better known, it began to attract in England, as in Italy, the attention of artists. Sir Joshua Reynolds's Ugolino (*d.* 1792) is, as far as I can trace, the first instance. It was followed in 1800 by a series of illustrations by William Blake. These are seven in number, and are confined to the *Inferno*, the subjects selected being *H.* v. 127; xxii. 70, 135; xxv. 45, 82; xxii. 71; xxxii. 79. The designs, in their weird titanic conception, are eminently characteristic. In the dream trance-like state which formed so large a part of Blake's life, he received visits, so he said, from Shakespeare, Milton, and Dante, and has left on record his judgment of the last named.

"Dante," he said, "was an atheist, a mere politician, busied about this world, as Milton was, till, in his old age, he returned to Him whom he had had in childhood." "He is now with God." "Dante and Wordsworth, in spite of their atheism, were inspired by the Holy Ghost."¹

Not long afterwards (1807) Flaxman was employed by Mr. Hope to illustrate Dante. His work embraced the whole of the *Commedia*, and includes not fewer than a hundred engravings. His mind also was in sympathy with the poet's genius, and of all illustrations of the *Commedia*, not excepting even Botticelli's, Flaxman's seem to me the most satisfying, especially in the *Paradiso*. The last and most complete edition was published in 1867.

The year 1770 was memorable for the appearance of the first English translation, aiming at more than the reproduction of a few striking passages, by the Rev. Henry Boyd, Curate of Tullamore in Ireland. The first edition was confined to the *Inferno*, but in 1785 it was republished with the *Purgatorio* and *Paradiso*.

Next in order I find a translation of the *Inferno* printed privately and anonymously in 1782, but identified by a MS. note in the copy in the British Museum as the work of Charles Rogers of the Custom-House.

It can scarcely be said that either Boyd or Rogers succeeded in making the wider public of English readers familiar with Dante's poem or in gaining any large measure of critical approval. With

¹ Crabb Robinson's *Reminiscences*, by T. Sadler, 3d ed. 1872, ii. pp. 10-19.

the next in order of succession the case was widely different. The translation by H. F. Cary (of the *Inferno*, H. i.-xvii. in 1805, the whole *Commedia* in 1814) at once took its place as the standard version.¹ He chose blank verse for his form, and succeeded in maintaining something of a Miltonic loftiness of style throughout. The work passed through many editions in the translator's lifetime, and still, as I have said, "holds its own" in the book-market in many cheap and popular editions. Well-nigh every English quotation of Dante, in reviews and elsewhere, is from Cary. Macaulay pronounced it to be a version of almost unequalled merit.² A MS. note by S. T. Coleridge on *Par. i.* 36-50 in the British Museum is, I think, worth quoting, as showing the estimate which he had formed of it:—

"Admirably translated. Oh, how few will appreciate its value. Genius is not alone sufficient. It must be present indeed in the translator, in order to supply a negative test by its sympathy, to feel that it has been well done. But it must be Taste, Scholarship, Discipline, Tact, that must do it."

One point at least was gained by Cary's translation. From that time forward no man aiming at literary reputation thought his education complete unless he had read Dante in Cary or in the original. The name became a household word, often quoted even where the man and his works were but little known. Well-nigh every review and magazine of more than ephemeral character had from time to time its article on Dante. Among those who led the way to a more critical study of the poet, S. T. Coleridge holds a prominent place. His remarks on Dante (*Lectures*, ii. 93-108) deserve recognition as being the first attempt at an estimate of the Florentine poet from the standpoint of a higher wisdom than that of the critics of similes and phrases.

I extract a few of the most striking passages from his *Lectures* (ii. 93-100):—

"Dante is the living link between religion and philosophy. He philosophised the religion and Christianised the philosophy of Italy.

¹ Cary's correspondence with Miss Seward, a literary lady of some eminence, given in his *Life*, furnishes a curious illustration of the taste of the opening years of this century. She considers that he is greatly demeaning himself in undertaking such a work, and thinks his version shockingly familiar and undignified.

² For Coleridge's connexion with Cary see the *Life* of the latter, or the article *Cary* in the Dictionary of National Biography.

"The Greeks changed ideas into finites, and these finites into anthropomorphs. Their religion, their poetry, their very pictures, became statuesque. With them the form was the end. The reverse of this is found in Christianity: finites, even the human form, must be brought into connexion with, and be symbolical of, the infinite, and hence arose a combination of poetry (1) with doctrine and (2) with sentiment.

"You cannot read Dante without feeling a gush of manliness of thought within him.

"The topographic reality of Dante's Hell is one of his great charms. He takes the thousand delusive forms of a nature worse than chaos and compels them into the service of the permanent.

"Dante becomes grotesque from being too graphic without imagination, as, *e.g.*, in his *Lucifer* as compared with Milton's *Satan*. He substitutes the *μισήτρών* for the *διον* of Longinus."

A less thorough-going admiration, not unmixed with the tendency to cavil at a greatness which he could not measure, found expression in Leigh Hunt's *Stories from the Italian Poets*. He shrinks, in real or affected horror, from the terrible descriptions of the *Inferno*. "Enough, enough, for God's sake! Take the disgust out of one's senses, O flower of true Christian wisdom and charity, now beginning to fill the air with fragrance." A somewhat fairer criticism adds, as one of Dante's characteristics, that "he has the minute probabilities of a Defoe in the midst of the loftiest and most generalising poetry," but the judge finally sums up against the defendant, and decides that "he wanted the music of a happy and happy-making disposition." What Leigh Hunt thus said in the lightness of his heart was uttered by Walter Savage Landor with characteristic vehemence. In his *Pentameron*, in an "imaginary conversation" between Boccaccio and Petrarch, he puts into the mouth of the latter a judgment which has not the faintest shadow of dramatic probability, and in which therefore we must see the writer speaking through a mask. From his point of view the *Inferno* is "the most immoral and impious book ever written." It is the utterance of "personal resentment, outrageous to the pitch of the ludicrous, positively screaming." Dante himself is "a gratuitous logician, a preposterous politician, a cruel theologian." A poem on Dante in the *Last Fruit from an Old Tree*, however, gives, it should be added, a more reasonable judgment.

A few fragmentary notices from celebrities of the first half of the present century are, perhaps, worth remembering. Thus Lord Brougham tells the students of Glasgow in his *Inaugural Address* that there can be "no better training for pulpit or forensic eloquence than the verse that embodied the suffering of Ugolino and the scorn of Farinata." We think, not without satisfaction, of Robert Hall, as one of the great masters of that pulpit eloquence, finding in the *Commedia* something more than an education in rhetoric, and gaining from it strength and refreshment during his long months of agonising pain. It is pleasant also to find that Sydney Smith took in his old age to the study of Dante.

The wide range of reading which was necessary for such a work as Hallam's *Literature of Europe* could scarcely help including some knowledge of Dante. The date which he took as his starting-point, A.D. 1400, excluded, of course, any systematic treatment of the poet's life and works, but in the general survey of European literature with which the book opens, he names Dante and Petrarch as the "morning stars" of our modern literature, the latter "having as much the advantage over the former in his influence over the taste of his age as he was his inferior in depth of thought and creative power" (i. 56). He notes the influence of Dante in the revival of classical studies. "Those were ready for the love of Virgil who had formed their sense of beauty by the figures of Giotto and the language of Dante. The subject of Dante is truly mediæval, but his style, the clothing of poetry, bears the strongest marks of his acquaintance with antiquity" (i. p. 143).

A comparison between Milton and Dante (iv. 421) is, I think, worth quoting at length :—

"To Dante, however, he (Milton) bears a much greater likeness. He has in common with that poet a uniform seriousness, for the brighter colouring of both is but the smile of a pensive mind, a fondness for argumentative speech, and for the same strain of argument. This indeed proceeds in part from the general similarity, the religious, and even theological, cast of their subjects : I advert particularly to the last part of Dante's poem. We may almost say, when we look to the resemblance of their prose writings, in the proud sense of being born for some great achievement, which breathes through the *Vita Nuova*, as it does through Milton's earlier treatises, that they were twin spirits, and that each might have animated the other's body ; that each would, as it were, have been the other, if he had lived in the other's age. . . . Yet

even as religious poets, there are several remarkable distinctions between Milton and Dante. It has been justly observed that, in the *Paradise* of Dante, he makes use of but three leading ideas—light, music, and motion, and that Milton has drawn Heaven in less pure and spiritual colours. The philosophical imagination of the former, in this third part of his poem, almost defecated from all sublunary things by long and solitary musing, spiritualises all that it touches.”

The more elaborate comparison of the two poets in Lord Macaulay’s *Essay on Milton* is too long for reproduction, but some of the more striking passages are worth transcribing :—

“The poetry of Milton differs from that of Dante as the hieroglyphics of Egypt differ from the picture-writing of Mexico. The images which Dante employs speak for themselves ; they stand simply for what they are. Those of Milton have a signification which is often discernible only to the initiated. . . . However strange, however grotesque, he never shrinks from describing it. He gives us the shape, the colour, the sound, the smell, the taste ; he counts the numbers ; he measures the size. His similes are the illustrations of a traveller. Unlike those of other poets, and especially of Milton, they are introduced in a plain business-like manner ; not for the sake of any beauty in the objects from which they are drawn ; not for the sake of any ornament they may impart to the poem ; but simply in order to make the meaning of the writer as clear to the reader as it is to himself.

“The character of Milton was peculiarly distinguished by loftiness of spirit ; that of Dante by intensity of feeling. In every line of the *Divine Comedy* we discern the asperity which is produced by pride struggling with misery. There is perhaps no work in the world so deeply and uniformly sorrowful. The melancholy of Dante was no fantastic caprice. It was not, as far as at this distance of time can be judged, the effect of external circumstances. It was from within. Neither love nor glory, neither the conflict of earth nor the hope of Heaven, could dispel it. It turned every consolation and every pleasure into its own nature. It resembled that noxious Sardinian soil of which the intense bitterness is said to have been perceptible even in its honey. His mind was, in the noble language of the Hebrew poet, ‘a land of darkness,’ as darkness itself, and where the light was as darkness. The gloom of his character discolours all the passions of men and all the face of Nature, and tinges with its own livid hue the flowers of Paradise and the glories of the eternal throne. All the portraits of him are singularly characteristic. No person can look on the features, noble even to ruggedness, the dark furrows of the cheek,¹ the haggard and

¹ Lord Macaulay wrote, it will be remembered, before the discovery of the Bargello portrait.

woful stare of the eye, the sullen and contemptuous curl of the lip, and doubt that they belonged to a man too proud and too sensitive to be happy."

We have traced the judgment passed on Dante by writers who were pre-eminently critics. It remains to inquire how far his fame was recognised by the greater poets of the first half of the present century, or his influence traceable in their writings. For the most part, he is simply conspicuous by his absence. The index to Wordsworth's *Poems*, in Dr. Knight's exhaustive edition, does not show a single reference to him. Southey just appeals to him as furnishing a precedent for his *Vision of Judgment*. Shelley, in his *Epipsychidion* shows himself acquainted with the poem of the *Vita Nuova*, and takes the close of *Canz.* xiv. as a preface-motto,¹ Of the poets of that period, Byron is the chief name which presents any striking links connecting it with Dante, and he, different as was the type of his own temperament and character, seems to have striven to enter into the mind and heart of the Florentine. In *Childe Harold* (iv. 57) we have the well-known stanza beginning :—

"Ungrateful Florence ! Dante sleeps afar,
Like Scipio, buried by the upbraiding shore."

In *Don Juan*, besides some cynical lines on Dante's wife and

¹ Three passages from Shelley are brought to my notice by Dr. R. Garnett as these sheets are passing through the press :—(1.) From the *Defence of Poetry* "Dante understood the secret things of love even more than Petrarch. His *Vita Nuova* is an inexhaustible fountain of purity of sentiment and language ; it is the idealised history of that period and those intervals of his life which were dedicated to love. His apotheosis of Beatrice in Paradise, and the gradations of his own love and her loveliness, by which, as steps, he feigns himself to have ascended to the throne of the Supreme Cause, is the most glorious imagination of modern poetry. The acutest critics have justly revered the judgment of the vulgar and the order of the great acts of the *Divina Commedia* in the measure of the admiration which they accord to the Hell, Purgatory, and Paradise. The latter is a perpetual hymn of everlasting love. . . . The poetry of Dante may be considered as the bridge thrown over the stream of time, which unites the modern and the ancient world. . . . Homer was the first and Dante the second epic poet. . . . Dante was the first awakener of entranced Europe ; he created a language in itself music and persuasive, out of a chaos of inharmonious barbarisms. He was the congregator of those great spirits who presided over the resurrection of learning ; the Lucifer of that starry flock which, in the thirteenth century, shone forth from republican Italy as from a heaven, into the darkness of the benighted world. His very words are instinct with spirit ; each is as a spark, a burning atom of inextinguishable thought ; and many yet lie covered in the ashes of their birth, and pregnant with a lightning which has as yet found no conductor." (2.) In the *Letters from Italy*, No. 3, he speaks of "one solitary spot" in Milan Cathedral, "where the light of day is dim and yellow under the storied window, which I have chosen to visit and read Dante there." (3.) In *Letter 102*, written only twenty days before his death, he writes :—"When she (Italy) becomes of her own accord full of genuine admiration for the final scene in the *Purgatorio* or the opening of the *Paradiso*, or some other neglected piece of excellence, we may hope great things." Here also, as in the case of Byron, we note the "gush of masculine energy" of which Coleridge spoke.

his love for Beatrice (iii. 10, 11), we have (iii. 108) a reproduction of one of the most beautiful passages of the *Purgatorio* (viii. 1-6). His greatest and most elaborate effort, however, was in *The Prophecy of Dante*. He had visited Ravenna, and had breathed the breezes of its pine-forest. The *genius loci* was strong upon him, and led to thoughts which found utterance in *The Prophecy of Dante* (June, 1819), and later on to a translation of the Francesca episode in *terza rima* (March, 1820). The *Prophecy* is also written in that metre, and is in four cantos, each of nearly 200 lines. It is significant of the delight which he felt in the new, and, we may believe, for a time, ennobling and purifying influence, that he sent it to his publisher as "the best thing he had ever done." We, at any rate, may note in it passages of a loftier tone than are to be found elsewhere in any of Byron's poems. Dante, it will be remembered, is throughout personated as the speaker:—

"I am old in days
And deeds and contemplation, and have met
Destruction face to face in all its ways.
The world hath left me, what it found me, pure ;
And if I have not gathered yet its praise,
I sought it not by any baser lure.

.

We can have but one country, and even yet
Thou'rt mine ! My bones shall be within thy breast,
My soul within thy language, which once set
With our old Roman sway in the wide West ;
But I will make another tongue arise
As lofty and more sweet, in which express'd,
The hero's ardour or the lover's sighs
Shall find alike such sounds for every theme,
That every word, as brilliant as the skies,
Shall realise a poet's proudest dream,
And make thee Europe's nightingale of song.

.

Many are poets, but without the name ;
For what is poesy but to create
From over-feeling good or ill, and aim
At an external life beyond our fate,
And be the new Prometheus of new men,
Bestowing fire from heaven, and then, too late,
Finding the pleasure given repaid with pain,
And vultures to the heart of the bestower,
Who, having lavished his high gift in vain,
Lies chained to his lone rock by the sea-shore.
So be it : we can bear."

"That strain we heard was of a higher mood." Byron rises above his Byronisms, and catches for a time what Coleridge has called the "inspiration of a masculine energy" rushing through his spirit. Critics may praise or blame the *Prophecy of Dante* as a work of art according to their measures. To me it is welcome as having for a time raised the unhappy English poet above himself, and brought him into sympathy with a loftier and purer soul. One or two sentences of a more direct critical estimate are worth quoting from his diary (January 29, 1821). He has been reading Frederick Schlegel's *Lectures on the History of Literature*, and comes across his judgment on Dante, in which he notes that the poet's "chief defect is a want, in a word, of gentle feelings." Then follows Byron's comment: "Of gentle feelings! and Francesca of Rimini, and the father's feelings in Ugolino, and Beatrice, and the Pia! Why, there is a gentleness in Dante above all gentleness, when he is tender. It is true that, treating of the Christian Hades or Hell, there is not much scope or site for gentleness; but who *but* Dante could have introduced any 'gentleness' at all into Hell? Is there any in Milton's? No; and Dante's Heaven is all love, and glory, and majesty."

The fact that Robert Browning chose as the subject of his first great poem the Sordello who occupies so prominent a position in the *Purgatorio* of Dante, shows that he had been drawn in early life to a study of the *Commedia*. Whatever view we take of the researches which led him to create a history of Sordello so different from that which has been worked out by Dante commentators, he had at least grasped the thought that, of all the earlier poets of Italy, Sordello was the one who stood most closely in the relation of spiritual fatherhood to Dante:—

"For he—for he,
Gate-vein of this heart's blood of Lombardy
(If I should falter now)—for he is Thine!
Sordello, thy fore-runner, Florentine.
A herald-star I know thou didst absorb
Relentless into the consummate orb
That scared it from its right to roll along
A sempiternal path with dance and song,
Fulfilling its allotted period,
Serenest of the progeny of God!

.

Dante, pacer of the shore
Where glutt'd Hell disgorgeth filthiest gloom,
Unbitten by its whirling sulphur-spume—
Or whence the griev'd and obscure waters slope
Into a darkness quieted by hope ;
Plucker of amaranths grown beneath God's eye,
In gracious twilight, where His chosen lie : ”

—*Sordello*, B. i.

As a pendant to this I add a passage from the poetess whose name is so closely associated with that of the author of *Sordello*, alike by kindred genius and by the sacred life-ties of home—Elizabeth Barrett Browning. She is describing the gathering of the Florentines in 1848 as they addressed their Grand Duke Leopold with a demand for liberty:—

"Whom chose they then? where met they?"
On the stone
Called Dante's—a plain flat stone, scarce discerned
From others in the pavement,—whereupon
He used to bring his quiet chair out, turned
To Brunelleschi's church, and pour alone
The lava of his spirit when it burned:
It is not cold to-day. O passionate
Poor Dante, who, a banished Florentine,
Didst sit austere at banquets of the great,
And muse upon this far-off stone of thine,
And think how oft some passer used to wait
A moment in the golden day's decline
With 'Good-night, dearest Dante!'—Well, good-night!"

—CASA GUIDI'S WINDOWS.

—Casa Guidi Windows.

The early poems of Lord Tennyson present here and there indications that he too was "drawing light" as in a "golden urn" from the great well-spring of the fourteenth century. So in his *Palace of Art*, along with Milton and Shakespeare, there is a third—

“ And there the world-worn Dante grasped his song,
And somewhat grimly smiled.”

In the *Ulysses* we have the tribute of a half-conscious reproduction of the leading thought of *H.* xxvi. 91-142. The lines which stand on the title-page of this volume, true of any of the master-poets of the world, will be felt, I believe, to be true in the highest degree of the master-poet of Florence. The writer of the *Idylls of the King* must have felt in sympathy with the poet to whom the names of Lancelot and Guinevere and Modred and

Merlin were familiar things. The sex-centenary festival of 1865 drew forth a more direct utterance, which I have already quoted in p. 435.¹

The student of the history of religious thought in England, who sees how closely the estimate which men have formed of Dante has been associated in the past with their political and religious convictions, can scarcely fail to ask how far there has been a like association among ourselves. Of the three great schools which popularly represent the phases of religious thought among us, that of Evangelical Protestantism may be passed over with but a cursory notice. It may be my misfortune or my fault, but I cannot call to mind any prominent writer of the Evangelical School who makes even a passing reference to the *Commedia*.² All that I can do is to note the fact that an intelligent and appreciative review of the first volume of this translation in the *Record* of December 24, 1886, shows that the influence of Dante has at last penetrated even into the regions which seemed least open to it. Putting aside all that refers to the translation as such, I quote with satisfaction words in which the writer utters his own feeling as to the original:—

“The world has moved, as Galileo showed, and in the region through which it is moving now there are visions better than Dante's, truer than some of his. There is clear gain permanently made sure to men; but

¹ Mr. Matthew Arnold unites in himself, more than any living author, the commonly divided functions of poet and critic. He has written of Dante chiefly in the latter character, but not largely. An article on Dante and Beatrice in *Fraser's Magazine* (lxvii. 1863) is chiefly occupied in examining Sir Theodore Martin's theory as to the *Vita Nuova*. In it he pronounces judgment alike against the allegorists, who see in Beatrice only the symbol of Philosophy or Heavenly Wisdom, and against those at the opposite pole, who, like Sir Theodore Martin, think of her as, in Wordsworth's language—

“The perfect woman, nobly planned,
To help, to comfort, and command,”

and who “try to find a Dante admirable and complete in the life of the world as in the life of the spirit, and when they cannot find him, invent him.” He rejects the theory that “Dante *must* have proposed to Beatrice,” and that Gemma married with a perfect and sympathising knowledge of all the past. This seems to him to sin against the canon that “art requires a basis of fact, and then the freest handling,” to be “a mere imagining, singularly inappropriate to its object.” The “grand impracticable solitary” is “transformed into the hero of a sentimental but strictly virtuous novel.” “Beatrice was to Dante at twenty-one more a spirit than a woman, at twenty-five still more a spirit, and at fifty a spirit altogether.” “To him all things are hollow and miserable compared with the divine vision. Every way which does not lead to this is a *via non vera*.”

² Mr. Garbett, whose election as Professor of Poetry at Oxford against Isaac Williams was once looked on as a triumph of Evangelical Protestantism, ought perhaps to be named as an exception. He was, I believe, an Italian scholar and a student of Dante; but I am not acquainted with his professorial lectures, and have no access to them as I write.

there is loss as well as gain, and that loss is likely to be felt more and more to be loss as Christian wide-mindedness increases, and the eyes of men are purged, like the eyes of God, 'in every place beholding the evil and the good.' . . . We believe that in this book we have probably made a life-long friend, whose silent friendship will be no mean aid in discriminating when things differ between evil and good, between the false and the true, and in discerning in what and in whom chiefly are to be found the virtue and the praise about which Christians are to think, and towards which, through whatever winding of the pathway, they are to pass on."

With the school of thought which popular feeling has ticketed the Broad, the case stood far otherwise. They had learnt to recognise the elements of truth, the aspects of beauty manifested in the history of Christendom in its progress through the ages. I have already given quotations from S. T. Coleridge, who may be fairly taken as one of the earliest representatives, if not of the school, yet of the leading spirits of the movement, showing what he thought of Dante. Next in order of time and eminence I place Julius Charles Hare. His wide culture embraced Dante, but I do not know that he was ever distinctly a Dante student. As it is, I find but one passage bearing upon the subject of the present essay:—

"This is what I meant by speaking of the *δωρεος αἰθήρ* of Greek literature. The Greeks saw what they saw thoroughly. Their eyes were piercing, and they knew how to use them and trust them. In modern literature, on the other hand, the pervading feeling is that we see through a glass darkly, while with the Greeks the unseen world was the world of shadows. In the great works of modern times there is a more or less conscious feeling that the outward world of the eye is the world of shadows, that the tangled web of life is to be swept away, and that the invisible world is the only abode of true, living realities. How strongly is this indicated by the two great works which stand at the head of ancient and of Christian literature, the Homeric poems and the *Divina Commedia*? While the former teem with life, like a morning in spring, and everything in them, as on such a morning, has its life raised to the highest pitch, Dante's wanderings are all in the regions beyond the grave. He begins with overleaping death and leaving it behind him, and to his imagination the secret things of the next world and its inhabitants seem to be more distinctly and vividly present than the persons and things around him" (*Guesses at Truth*, p. 67, ed. 1866).

It is not without a sense of disappointment that I note the fact that I do not find the slightest allusion to Dante in the writings of

Thomas Arnold. The same conspicuousness of absence characterises, so far as my memory serves me, the published writings of Dean Stanley; and, with the exception of a passing notice of Rossetti's theories in a letter, I do not remember any Dante utterance from the pen of Connop Thirlwall.

It is not easy to make any positive assertion as to allusions that may be found written in the numerous works of Frederick Maurice, most of them without an index. A single passage in the last edition of his *Moral and Metaphysical Philosophy* (i. p. 674, ed. 1872) is, however, enough to show his insight into Dante's character and his capacity for interpreting his writings. The reader will, I think, agree with me in wishing that he had written much more. He has given twelve pages to the life and teaching of Raymond Lully, and then he proceeds:—

“There was another far grander spirit than Raymond's which was passing at the same time through a very similar crisis. Dante Alighieri was changed from a Guelph into a Ghibelline. Dante Alighieri, the most earnest theologian of his time, found the persecuted Manfred in Purgatory, and some Popes in one of the most hopeless circles of the world below. Yet no one more thoroughly honoured the founders of the Mendicant Orders. The Dominican Aquinas in the *Paradiso* celebrates the praises of St. Francis. He himself proved his claim to be the Angelic Doctor by untying, there as here, the most subtle knots of the intellect. But the poet who listened with delight to those solutions is the poet of Florence and of Italy; the transcendental metaphysician never for an instant forgets the sorrows of the actual world in which he is living; the student sustains the patriot. Drenched in the school lore, it is still the vulgar eloquence, the speech of the people, that is dear to him. Virgil is his master because Virgil was a Mantuan and sang of Italy. And neither theology, politics, nor the study of ancient song crushes the life of the individual man. Fervent human love was the commencement to the poet of a new life. Through the little child of nine years old he rises to the contemplation of the Divine charity which governs all things in heaven and subdues earth to itself.

“Wise men of our own day have said that Dante embodies the spirit of the mediæval time and is a prophet of the time which followed. We testify our assent to that remark by accepting his poem, coeval as it is with the great judgment of the Papacy under Boniface, with the practical termination of the religious wars, and with the rise of a native literature, not only in the South, but in the North, as a better epoch from which to commence the new age of European thought than the German reformation of the sixteenth century. That we do not think less of that mighty event than those do who suppose that it winds up

the scholastic period, we trust that we shall be able to show hereafter. But its real importance for philosophy as well as humanity, we think, is imperfectly appreciated when it is looked upon as a new starting-point in the history of either. There is a danger also lest our Northern and Teutonic sympathies, which ought to be very strong, which cannot be too strong if they do not lead us to forget that God is the King of the whole earth, may make us unmindful of the grand place which Italy has occupied, and we trust is one day again to occupy, in the annals of mankind. We have no disposition to set Thomas of Aquino above Albert the Suabian or Roger Bacon of Ilchester; still less have we any disposition to exalt the fourteenth century above the sixteenth. But the Florentine poet may be taken as a hopeful augury that better things are in reserve for the nineteenth century than for either; that in place of the false universalism, which he felt inwardly to be an incubus upon his country and upon mankind, a true universal society—such as he longed for on earth and had the vision of in Heaven—may yet include England, Germany, and Italy within its circle."

But of all the writers who, as separating themselves from the other two sections of Christian thought, may be grouped as among the leaders of the Broad Church school, none occupies so prominent a position in regard to Dante as Henry Hart Milman, Dean of St. Paul's. The author of *Belshazzar's Feast*, the translator of Æschylus and Horace, had all that was necessary of scholarly and poetic culture to enable him to appreciate the great Florentine as a poet. The historian of Latin Christianity had entered more fully than any man in England (it would not be rash to add "in Europe") into the history of mediæval thought. No previous writer had entered as he did into the idealism of the *De Monarchiâ* (*L. C.* vii. pp. 314-317), or traced so fully the relation of the *Commedia* to the popular traditions of Hell, Purgatory, and Paradise (*L. C.* ix. pp. 88-96).

"All these," he says, speaking of the earlier visions of the unseen world, "interest only as they may be supposed to appear to have been faint types of the great Italian poet. Dante is the one authorised topographer of the Mediæval Hell" (*L. C.* ix. p. 89).

"That in all the Paradise of Dante there should be a dazzling sameness, a mystic indistinctness, an inseparable blending of the real and the unreal, is not wonderful, if we consider the nature of the subject, and the still more incoherent and incongruous conceptions which he had to represent and to harmonise. It is more wonderful that, with these few elements, Light, Music, and Mysticism, he should, by his

singular talent of embodying the purely abstract and metaphysical theology in the liveliest imagery, represent such things with the most objective truth, yet without disturbing their fine spiritualism. The subtlest scholasticism is not more subtle than Dante. It is perhaps a bold assertion, but what is there on these transcendent subjects, in the vast theology of Aquinas, of which the essence and sum is not in the *Paradiso* of Dante? Dante, perhaps, though expressing, to a great extent, the popular conception of Heaven, is as much by his innate sublimity above it as St. Thomas himself" (*L. C.* ix. p. 96).

At a later stage of his work Dean Milman formally estimates the influence of Dante on the language and literature of Europe. To transcribe what he thus wrote would be to reproduce what has been already said, perhaps more than once, in these volumes, but a few pregnant sentences seem worth quoting :—

"Christendom owes to Dante the creation of Italian poetry, through Italian, of Christian poetry. It required all the courage, firmness, and prophetic sagacity of Dante to throw aside the inflexible bondage of the established hierarchical Latin of Europe" (*L. C.* ix. p. 198).

"To my mind there is a singular kindred and similitude between the last great Latin and the first great Italian writer, though one is a poet and the other a historian. Tacitus and Dante have the same penetrative truth of observation as to man and the external world of man. They have the common gift of flashing a whole train of thought, a vast range of images on the mind by a few brief and pregnant words; the same faculty of giving life to human emotions by natural images, of imparting to natural images, as it were, human life and human sympathies; each has the intuitive judgment of saying just enough; the rare talent of compressing a mass of profound thought into an apophthegm; each paints with words, with the fewest possible words, yet the picture lives and speaks. Each has that relentless moral indignation, that awful power of satire, which in the historian condemns to an immortality of earthly infamy, in the Christian poet aggravates that gloomy immortality of this world by ratifying it in the next. Each might seem to embody remorse. Patrician, imperial, princely, Papal criminals are compelled to acknowledge the justice of their doom. Each, too, writing, one of times just past, of which the influences were strongly felt in the social state and fortunes of Rome, the other of his own, in which he had been actively concerned, throws a personal passion (Dante, of course, the most) into his judgments and his language, which, whatever may be its effect on their justice, adds wonderfully to their force and reality. Each, too, has a lofty sympathy with good, only that the highest ideal of Tacitus is a death-defying Stoic or an all-accomplished Roman Proconsul, an Helvidius Thræsea or an Agricola; that Dante of

a suffering, and so purified and beatified Christian saint or martyr; in Tacitus it is a majestic and virtuous Roman matron, an Agrippina; in Dante, an unreal mysterious Beatrice."

Of all the schools of religious thought in England in our own time, none seemed so likely to look on Dante with more reverence and interest than that which is commonly identified with the so-called Oxford movement. That movement differed from the Evangelical in the greater width of its sympathies, in its wider culture, in its recognition of the continuity of the Church's unity, and of the great work accomplished by the thinkers and rulers, not only of early, but of Mediæval Christendom. As in the parallel movement in France and Germany, it would have been natural to expect that its leaders would have looked to Dante as one who represented a theology which, as a whole, they regarded with respect, whose work as a poet rested on the creeds of Christendom, who sought to raise men to a higher standard of Christian holiness. Of two of the great leaders of the school in its earlier stages, however, it may be said that they show no traces of Dante's influence. Pusey was wanting in the poetic element; his Hebrew, patristic, and Anglican studies, the controversial works which flowed so freely from his pen, occupied his mind and time. J. H. Newman comes before us as offering an unconscious parallelism with Dante rather than as showing any traces of his influence. The *Dream of Gerontius* unites in a manner altogether Dantesque the elements of demonic grotesque, scholastic subtlety, and mystic tenderness. The narrative of the *Apologia pro Vita Sua* shows the same restless craving for an ideal polity as that which we find in the *De Monarchiâ*, the same retrospective self-analysis as that which meets us in the *Convito*. Even the features and expression of the Cardinal present, if I mistake not, a marked likeness to those of the poet. On the other hand, Newman was not an Italian scholar, and had never read the *Commedia* in the original—had only tried, with partial success, to read Cary's translation of it. Altogether, therefore, it may be said of him—I speak of the past life which is *publici juris*—that he is too like Dante to have been, in any sense, a copy.

With the third member of the great Oxford triad the case was different. The author of the *Christian Year* was a poet with a poet's culture. If he had not studied Dante in Italian—of this I

have no evidence—he at least knew him well through translations. His office as Professor of Poetry at Oxford led him to analyse the sources and the nature of the influence of some at least of the great poets of the world, and Dante was one of them. The very title which he gave to his published *Prælectiones*, "*De Poeticæ Vi Medicâ*," showed how closely he connected the artistic work of the poet with the therapeutic treatment of the soul. An Italian quotation in an article on *Sacred Poetry* in the *Quarterly Review* (vol. xxxii.) shows that he could read Dante in the original. A passage from that article is worth quoting, though not bearing specifically on Dante, as showing the temperament which would qualify him to appreciate the *Commedia* :—

"If grave, simple, sustained melodies—if tones of deep but subdued emotion, are what our minds naturally suggest to us upon the mention of sacred *music*, why should there not be something analogous, a kind of plain chant, in sacred *poetry* also?—fervent yet sober, awful but engaging, neither wild and passionate nor light and airy, but such as we may with submission presume to be the most acceptable offering in its kind, as being indeed the truest expression of the best state of the affections. . . . *Ἐνθεον ἢ ποησις*, it is true; there must be rapture and inspiration, but these will naturally differ in their characters as the powers do from which they proceed. The worshippers of Baal may be rude and frantic in their cries and gestures; but the true prophet, speaking to or of the true God, is all dignity and calmness."

Later on there is a distinct comparison between Milton and Dante in their descriptions of Heaven which seems to me eminently characteristic.

"The one as simple as possible in his imagery, producing intense effect by little more than various combinations of *three* leading ideas—light, motion, and music—as if he feared to introduce anything more gross and earthly, and would rather be censured, as doubtless he often is, for coldness and poverty of invention. Whereas Milton, with very little selection or refinement, transfers to the immediate neighbourhood of God's throne the imagery of Paradise and earth."

But it is to the *Prælectiones* that we must look for a more deliberate estimate of Dante. He names him as a writer of sonnets "*quo nemo severius scripsit, nemo religiosius*" (ii. 474). He draws a suggestive parallelism between him and Lucretius, some of whose magnificent descriptions of nature he quotes as a proof of his truthfulness and vividness :—

"Quid si docebo, tale aliquid evenisse apud alium quoque poetam, qui proxime omnium tangere videatur Lucretium, quod ad ea attinet, quæ obscura sunt et infinita. Intellego Florentinum illum, triplici carmine nobilem, de triplici mortuorum statu. Quanto ille vir splendidissimæ poeseos apparatu variaverit instrumentum satis per se exile, partim musicorum modorum, partim radiorum supernæ lucis, partim nescio quo orbe mirifice saltantium novit unusquisque, qui primis modo labiis fontem ejus plane divinum hauserit.

"Jam vero, cui suffecit ut plurimum supellex adeo brevis et angusta, idem alioqui significat se non modice delectari sylvarum flexibus, obscuroque ac dubio per nemora et saltus itinere; velut ubi, sub ipso operis initio, narrat se via erravisse in valle nescio qua sylvestri et horrida; vel multo etiam magis in suavissimo carmine quo terrestres adumbratur Paradisus. . . .

"Immo etiam, ut id quod sentio dicam, qui Dantem in deliciis habent, non aliâ, maximam partem, voluptate fruuntur, atque ii qui per nemora avia gradiuntur, in certi quid quoque tempore futurum sit obvium. Adeo non incredibile videtur id quod in Lucretio modo docebam; si quem commovere soleant amore quodam obscure et infinitæ res, eidem scriptori cordi fore non apertum modo æquora, ignesque sideres, verum etiam nubium profunda et secretos sylvarum calles" (pp. 678, 679).

Lastly, in speaking of the influence exercised by Virgil on later poets as an ethical teacher, he writes:—

"Apud illos certe omnes unice ferme dominatus est Virgilius. Illum admirantur; eximia quoque quæque ab illius scriptis recitare amant; illi præ choro universo ethnicorum absque controversia primum tribuunt locum. Quid quod laudatissimus ille Dante, primarius non solum poeta verum etiam Theologus, Maronem potissimum eligit, quem ducem sibi adhiberi per arcana et infima loca" (p. 805).

It will be admitted, I think, that these extracts show the mind of one in sympathy with Dante, that where they fall on congenial soil they would be likely to spring up and bud and blossom and bear fruit. They find, at least, a late echo in the words of one who was then conspicuous among the leaders of the Oxford School. In a letter commendatory of Father H. S. Bowden's translation of Hettinger's work on Dante's *Divina Commedia, its Scope and Value*, Cardinal Manning says:—

"There are three works which always seem to me to form a triad of Dogma, of Poetry, and of Devotion,—the *Summa* of St. Thomas, the *Divina Commedia*, and the *Paradisus Animæ*.¹ All three contain the

¹ A Manual of Devotional Exercises by Horstius.

same outline of the Faith. St. Thomas traces it on the intellect, Dante upon the imagination, and the *Paradiseus Animæ* upon the heart. The poem unites the book of Dogma and the book of Devotion, clothed in conceptions of intensity and of beauty which have never been surpassed nor equalled. No uninspired hand has ever written thoughts so high in words so resplendent as the last stanza of the *Divina Commedia*. It was said of St. Thomas, '*Post summam Thomæ nihil restat nisi lumen gloriæ*.' It may be said of Dante, '*Post Dantis Paradisum nihil restat nisi visio Dei*'" (p. xxvii.)

But probably among Keble's hearers, certainly among those who grew up under his influence, there was one who was to do more for Dante in leading men to understand, and therefore to revere him, than any writer of this century. Not in the sense of its being a topic of the day or making a sensation, but as marking the beginning of a new era in the study of the *Commedia*, the article on Dante by Dean Church in the *Christian Remembrancer*¹ for January 1850 may well be described, in a favourite phrase of our Teutonic neighbours, as "epoch-making." It is thorough, complete, exhaustive. But its very completeness and its length forbid any attempt to analyse it, and the high thoughts and noble temper that permeate the whole make it difficult to select quotations. I content myself with a few passages that are of the nature of the estimates to which it is the object of this study to bring together, and start with the opening paragraph:—

"The *Divina Commedia* is one of the landmarks of history. More than a magnificent poem, more than the beginning of a language and the opening of a national literature, more than the inspirer of art and the glory of a great people, it is one of those rare and solemn monuments of the mind's power which measure and test what it can reach to, which rise up ineffaceably and for ever as time goes on, marking out its advance by grander divisions than its centuries, and adopted as epochs by the consent of all who come after. It stands with the *Iliad* and Shakspeare's *Plays*, with the writings of Aristotle and Plato, with the *Novum Organon* and the *Principia*, with Justinian's Code, with the Parthenon and St. Peter's. It is the first Christian poem, and it opens European literature as the *Iliad* did that of Greece and Rome. And, like the *Iliad*, it has never become out of date; it accompanies in undiminished freshness the literature which it began.

¹ Republished in *Essays and Reviews*, by R. W. Church, M.A., 1854, and separately with a translation of the *De Monarchia* in 1881.

"The *Commedia* is a novel and startling apparition in literature. Probably it has been felt by some, who have approached it with the reverence due to a work of such renown, that the world has been generous in placing it so high. It seems so abnormal, so lawless, so reckless of all ordinary proprieties and canons of feeling, taste, and composition. It is rough and abrupt, obscure in phrase and allusion, doubly obscure in purpose. It is a medley of all subjects usually kept distinct—scandal of the day and transcendental science, politics and confessions, coarse satire and angelic joy, private wrongs with the mysteries of the faith, local names and habitations of the earth, with visions of Hell and Heaven. It is hard to keep up with the ever-changing current of feeling, to pass, as the poet passes, without effort or scruple, from tenderness to ridicule, from hope to bitter scorn or querulous complaint, from high-raised devotion to the calmness of prosaic subtleties or grotesque detail. Each separate element and vein of thought has its precedent, but not their amalgamation. Many had written visions of the unseen world, but they had not blended with them their personal fortunes. St. Augustine had taught the soul to contemplate its own history, and had traced its progress from darkness to light,¹ but he had not interwoven with it the history of Italy, and the consummation of all earthly destinies. Satire was no new thing; Juvenal had given it a moral, some of the Provençal poets a political turn. St. Jerome had kindled with it fiercely and bitterly, even while expounding the Prophets, but here it streams forth in all its violence, within the precincts of the eternal world, and alternates with the hymns of the blessed. Lucretius had drawn forth the poetry of Nature and its laws; Virgil and Livy had unfolded the poetry of the Roman Empire; St. Augustine, the still grander poetry of the City of God, but none had yet ventured to weave into one the three wonderful threads. And yet the scope of the Italian poet, vast and comprehensive as the issue of all things, universal as the government which directs nature and intelligence, forbids him not to stoop to the lowest caitiff he has ever despised, the merest personal association which hangs pleasantly in his memory. Writing for all time, he scruples not to mix with all that is august and permanent in history and prophecy incidents the most transient and names the most obscure; to waste an immortality of shame or praise on those about whom his own generation were to inquire in vain.

"The 'Story of a Life,' the poetry of man's journey through the wilderness to his true country, is now in various and very different shapes as hackneyed a form of imagination as an allegory, an epic, a legend of chivalry, were in former times. Not, of course, that any time has been without its poetical feelings on the subject, and never were they deeper and more diversified, more touching and solemn, than in the ages that

¹ See *Convito*, i. 2.

passed from St. Augustine and St. Gregory to St. Thomas and St. Bonaventura. But a philosophical poem, where they were not merely the colouring but the subject, an *epos* of the soul, placed for its trial in a fearful and wonderful world, with relations to time and matter, history and nature, good and evil, the beautiful, the intelligible, and the mysterious, sin and grace, the infinite and the eternal, and having, in the company and under the influence of other intelligences, to make its choice, to struggle, to succeed or fail, to gain the light or be lost—this was a new and unattempted theme. It has been often tried since, in faith or doubt, in egotism, in sorrow, in murmuring, in affectation, sometimes in joy, in various forms, in prose and verse, completed or fragmentary, in reality or fiction, in the direct or the shadowed story, in the *Pilgrim's Progress*, in the *Confessions*, in *Wilhelm Meister* and *Faust*, in the *Excursion*. . . . But it was a new path then, and he needed to be, and was, a bold man who first opened it—a path never trod without peril, usually with loss or failure."

I must allow myself one more extract, in which the writer sums up in noble words the moral influence of the study of Dante's poem :—

"Those who know the *Divina Commedia* best will best know how hard it is to be the interpreter of such a mind ; but they will sympathise with the wish to call attention to it. They know, and would wish others also to know, not by hearsay, but by experience, the power of that wonderful poem. They know its austere yet subduing beauty ; they know what force there is in its free and earnest and solemn verse to strengthen, to tranquillise, to console. It is a small thing that it has the secret of Nature and Man ; that a few keen words have opened their eyes to new sights in earth, and sea, and sky ; have taught them new mysteries of sound ; have made them recognise, in distinct image or thought, fugitive feelings, or their unheeded expression, by look, or gesture, or motion ; that it has enriched the public and collective memory of society with new instances, never to be lost, of human feeling and fortune ; has charmed ear and mind by the music of its stately march, and the variety and completeness of its plan. But besides this, they know how often its seriousness has put to shame their trifling, its magnanimity their faint-heartedness, its living energy their indolence, its stern and sad grandeur rebuked low thoughts, its thrilling tenderness overcome sullenness and assuaged distress, its strong faith quelled despair and soothed perplexity, its vast grasp imparted the sense of harmony to the view of clashing truth. They know how often they have found in times of trouble, if not light, at least that deep sense of reality, permanent though unseen, which is more than light can always give—in the view which it has suggested to them of the judgments and love of God."

The reader will scarcely, I think, wonder that I should have dwelt so fully on Dean Church's unsurpassed essay. On one, at least, of its readers it worked, as I have said in the Dedication to the *Inferno*, with an "epoch-making power." I never turn to it, even now, without the feeling that it anticipates well-nigh all that has been said by others since, and says it better than most of them.

But there was another in the circle of Oxford students¹ of that time who may not be passed over in this review of those who, in the matter of reverence and love for Dante, have been as those who "*quasi cursores, vitæ lampada tradunt.*" Amid the wide range of interests which have occupied the leisure of Mr. Gladstone's life, Dante has held a place second only to Homer. How far he received the lighted torch from Mr. Keble or Dean Church I can only conjecture. It is true that he has not written much on Dante. A few references, by way of contrast, in his article on Leopardi (*Q. R.*, vol. lxxxvi.) show that he shared the admiration which the latter has so well expressed, that he had the power to appreciate as well as to admire. In the volume of translations by him and Lord Lyttelton (2nd edit., 1863), I find versions in triple rhyme of the Ugolino episode (*H.* xxxiii. 1-78), of the paraphrase of the Lord's Prayer (*Purg.* xi. 1-21), and of the speech of Piccarda (*Par.* iii. 70-87), which may well challenge comparison with any in the same form. The fullest acknowledgment, however, of the statesman's indebtedness to the poet is found in the letter to Signor Giambattista Giuliani, the author of *Dante spiegato con Dante*, published in the *Standard* of January 9, 1883:—

"Albeit I have lost the practice of the Italian language, yet I must offer you many, many thanks for your kindness in sending me your admirable work. . . . You have been good enough to call that 'supreme poet' a 'solemn master' for me. These are not empty words. The reading of Dante is not merely a pleasure, a *tour de force*, or a lesson; it is a vigorous discipline for the heart, the intellect, the whole man. In the school of Dante I have learnt a great part of that mental provision (however insignificant it be) which has served me to make the journey of life up to the term of nearly seventy-three years. And I should like to extend your excellent phrase, and to say that he who labours for Dante labours to serve Italy, Christianity, the world."

¹ An able review of Ozanam's *Dante et la Philosophie Catholique* in the *Christian Remembrancer* by Mr., now, I believe, Father, Dalgairns, deserves honourable mention in connexion with the Dante literature of the Oxford movement.

It would not be difficult, I think, to show, as I have partly done in the Dedication of the *Purgatorio*, that there was in the characters of the two men something which gave to Dante's influence over the writer of this letter the nature of an attraction of affinity. I will not enter into the debateable ground of politics ; but apart from any question of the hour, it will, I believe, be admitted that what has distinguished Mr. Gladstone from most, if not from all, the other statesmen of our time, is that he has always been conspicuously the follower of an ideal. From the *Essay on the Relations of Church and State* to the last developments of Home Rule policy, there has always been the enthusiasm of a noble nature for the triumph of what seemed a loftier and more Christian polity than had obtained before. And in this I find that which brings him into fellowship with the author of the *De Monarchia*. The ideal may vary according to the changes of time and circumstance. Dante passed from the Guelph ideal to that of the Ghibelline, from the theory which made the Church supreme over the State to that which saw in the Empire the supreme remedy for the corruptions of the Church and the license of the republics of Italy. Mr. Gladstone has passed from the old theory of a Church established by the State, recognised by it as the one authorised teacher of Divine truth, to the *imperium* of the new Democracy, in which, with no intervention of the State, each man hears, or forbears to hear, the Church's voice on his own responsibility. But what marks the character of the idealist statesman, as distinguished from the politicians of routine or party, is that he believes with all his soul in the ideal which for the time possesses him. This gives him an enthusiasm which commands the sympathy of millions. For it he gives up office or breaks up a party. He forms, in some sense, a *parte per se stesso*, and learns to say, amid the criticisms of candid friends or the calumnies of opponents, *Lascia dir le genti*, and, in his belief that the cause for which he fights will overcome all difficulties, reminds us, whether we share the belief or not, of him of whom it was written :—

“ *La Chiesa militante alcun figliuolo
Non ha con più speranza.*”—*Par.* xxv. 52.

Of the other writers of our time who have influenced the minds of thoughtful readers, two stand out conspicuously as having

written much of Dante, and with profound reverence and insight—John Ruskin and Thomas Carlyle. The following extracts from passages scattered here and there through the many volumes of the former will, I think, be welcomed by most readers:—

“I have above said that all great European art is rooted in the thirteenth century, and it seems to me that there is a kind of central year about which we may consider the energy of the Middle Ages to be gathered; a kind of focus of time, which, by what is to my mind a most touching and impressive Divine appointment, has been marked for us by the greatest writer of the Middle Ages in the first words he utters, namely, the year 1300, the ‘*mezzo del cammin*’ of the life of Dante.”—*Stones of Venice*, ii. 342.

“I believe that there is no test of greatness in periods, nations, or men more sure than the development, among them or in them, of a noble grotesque; and no test of comparative smallness or limitation, of one kind or another, more sure than the absence of grotesque invention or incapability of understanding it. I think that the central man of all the world, as representing in perfect balance the imaginative, moral, and intellectual faculties, all at their highest, is Dante; and in him the grotesque reaches at once the most distinct and the most noble development to which it was ever brought in the human mind. . . . Of the grotesqueness in our own Shakespeare I need hardly speak, nor of its intolerableness to his French critics; nor of that of Æschylus and Homer, as opposed to the lower Greek writers; and so I believe it will be found, at all periods, in all minds of the first order.”—*Stones of Venice*, iii. 158.

“The whole of the *Inferno* is full of this grotesque, as well as the *Faerie Queen*, and these two poems, together with the works of Albert Dürer, will enable the reader to study it in its noblest forms, without reference to gothic cathedrals.”—*Stones of Venice*, iii. 147.

“Every line of the *Paradiso* is full of the most exquisite and spiritual expressions of Christian truth, and that poem is only less read than the *Inferno* because it requires far greater attention, and, perhaps, for its full enjoyment, a holier heart.”—*Stones of Venice*, ii. 324.

“Milton’s effort in all that he tells us of his *Inferno* is to make it indefinite; Dante’s to make it *definite*. Both, indeed, describe it as entered through gates; but within the gate all is wild and fenceless with Milton, having indeed its four rivers—the last vestige of the mediæval tradition—but rivers which flow through a waste of mountain and moorland, and by ‘many a frozen, many a fiery Alp.’ But Dante’s *Inferno* is accurately separated into circles drawn with well-pointed compasses; mapped and properly surveyed in every direction, trenched

in a thoroughly good style of engineering from depth to depth, and divided in the 'accurate middle' (*dritto mezzo*) of its deepest abyss, into a concentric series of moats and embankments, like those about a castle, with bridges from each embankment to the next, precisely in the manner of those bridges over Hiddekel and Euphrates, which Mr. Macaulay thinks so innocently designed, apparently not aware that he is laughing at Dante.

"Now, whether this be in what we moderns call 'good taste' or not, I do not mean just now to inquire,—Dante having nothing to do with taste but with the facts which he had seen ; only so far as the imaginative faculty of the two poets is concerned, note that Milton's vagueness is not the sign of imagination, but of its absence, so far as it is significant in this matter. . . . Imagination is always the seeing and asserting faculty ; that which obscures or conceals may be judgment or feeling, but not invention. The invention, whether good or bad, is in the accurate engineering, not in the fog or uncertainty" (*Modern Painters*, iii. part iv. chap. xiv. pp. 29, 30).

I cannot resist quoting in conclusion the passage to which I have referred in the note on *Purg.* xxviii. 80 on the symbolism of Matilda and Leah :—

"This vision of Rachel and Leah has been always, and with unquestionable truth, received as a type of the Active and Contemplative life, and as an introduction to the two divisions of the Paradise which Dante is about to enter. Therefore the unwearied spirit of the Countess Matilda is understood to represent the Active life, which forms the felicity of earth ; and the spirit of Beatrice the Contemplative life, which forms the felicity of Heaven. This interpretation appears at first straightforward and certain, but it has missed count of exactly the most important fact in the two passages which we have to explain. Observe : Leah gathers the flowers to decorate *herself*, and delights in *her own* labour. Rachel sits silent, contemplating herself, and delights in *her own* image. These are the types of the unglorified Active and Contemplative powers of man. But Beatrice and Matilda are the same powers glorified. And how are they glorified ? Leah took delight in her own labour ; but Matilda—'in operibus *manuum Tuarum*'—in *God's labour* ;—Rachel in the sight of her own face ; Beatrice in the sight of *God's face*.

"And thus, when afterwards Dante sees Beatrice on her throne, and prays her that, when he himself shall die, she would receive him with kindness, Beatrice merely looks down for an instant, and answers with a single smile, then 'towards the eternal fountain turns.'—*M. P.* iii. 224.

In Carlyle's *Lectures on Heroes* we may find the note of a truer, more appreciative estimate of Dante than had found utterance in

Hallam and Macaulay. The fact that his brother, Dr. J. A. Carlyle, was translating the *Inferno* into prose had, we may well believe, led him to study the *Commedia* with the thoroughness which belonged to his nature when he gave himself to study anything. I content myself with quoting some of the more striking passages. It will be felt, I believe, that here also we note the purifying and ennobling effect of the influence of Dante on a soul that had at least the capacity for greatness and of reverence for that which stood out conspicuously in the past history of the world, as instance of the heroic possibilities of man's nature in contrast with its average low level or its equally possible debasement:—

“Many volumes have been written by way of commentary on Dante and his book; yet, on the whole, with no great result. His biography is, as it were, irrecoverably lost for us. An unimportant, wandering, sorrow-stricken man, not much note was taken of him while he lived; and the most of that has vanished, in the long space that now intervenes. It is five centuries since he ceased writing and living here. After all commentaries, the book itself is mainly what we know of him. The book;—and one might add that portrait commonly attributed to Giotto, which, looking on it, you cannot help inclining to think genuine, whoever did it. To me it is a most touching face; perhaps of all faces that I know, the most so. Lonely there, painted as on vacancy, with the simple laurel wound round it; the deathless sorrow and pain, the known victory which is also deathless;—significant of the whole history of Dante! I think it is the mournfullest face that ever was painted from reality; an altogether tragic, heart-affecting face. There is in it, as foundation of it, the softness, tenderness, gentle affection as of a child; but all this is as if congealed into sharp contradiction, into abnegation, isolation, proud hopeless pain. A soft ethereal soul looking out so stern, implacable, grim, trenchant, as from imprisonment of thick-ribbed ice! Withal it is a silent pain too, a silent scornful one: the lip is curled in a kind of godlike disdain of the thing that is eating out his heart,—as if it were withal a mean insignificant thing, as if he whom it had power to torture and strangle were greater than it. The face of one wholly in protest, and life-long unsundering battle, against the world. Affection all converted into indignation—an implacable indignation; slow, equable, silent, like that of a god! The eye too, it looks out as in a kind of *surprise*, a kind of inquiry, why the world was of such a sort? This is Dante: so he looks, this ‘voice of ten silent centuries,’ and sings us ‘his mystic unfathomable song.’

“I give Dante my highest praise when I say of his *Divine Comedy* that it is, in all senses, genuinely a Song. In the very sound of it there

is a *canto fermo*; it proceeds as by a chant. The language, his simple *terza rima*, doubtless helped him in this. One reads along naturally with a sort of *lilt*. But I add, that it could not be otherwise; for the essence and material of the work are themselves rhythmic. Its depth, and rapt passion and sincerity, makes it musical;—go *deep* enough, there is music everywhere. A true inward symmetry, what one calls an architectural harmony, reigns in it, proportionates it all: architectural; which also partakes of the character of music. The three kingdoms, *Inferno*, *Purgatorio*, *Paradiso*, look out on one another like compartments of a great edifice; a great supernatural world-cathedral, piled up there, stern, solemn, awful: Dante's World of Souls! It is, at bottom, the *sincerest* of all poems; sincerity, here too, we find to be the measure of worth. It came deep out of the author's heart of hearts; and it goes deep, and through long generations, into ours. The people of Verona, when they saw him on the streets, used to say, '*Eccovi l'uom ch'è stato all' Inferno*,—See, there is the man that was in Hell!' Ah yes he had been in Hell;—in Hell enough, in long severe sorrow and struggle; as the like of him is pretty sure to have been. *Commedias* that come out *divine* are not accomplished otherwise. Thought, true labour of any kind, highest virtue itself, is it not the daughter of Pain? Born as out of the black whirlwind;—true *effort*, in fact, as of a captive struggling to free himself: that is Thought. In all ways we are 'to become perfect through *suffering*.'—But as I say, no work known to me is so elaborated as this of Dante's. It has all been as if molten, in the hottest furnace of his soul. It had made him 'lean' for many years. Not the general whole only; every compartment of it is worked-out, with intense earnestness, into truth, into clear visuality. Each answers to the other; each fits in its place, like a marble stone accurately hewn and polished. It is the soul of Dante, and in this the soul of the middle ages, rendered for ever rhythmically visible there. No light task; a right intense one: but a task which is *done*.

"Dante's painting is not graphic only, brief, true, and of a vividness as of fire in dark night; taken on the wider scale, it is every way noble, and the outcome of a great soul. Francesca and her lover, what qualities in that! A thing woven as out of rainbows, on a ground of eternal black. A small flute-voice of infinite wail speaks there, into our very heart of hearts. A touch of womanhood in it too, *della bella persona, che mi fu tolta*; and how, even in the pit of woe, it is a solace that he will never part from her! Saddest tragedy in these *alti guai*. And the racking winds, in that *aer bruno*, whirl them away again, to wail for ever!—Strange to think: Dante was the friend of this poor Francesca's father; Francesca herself may have sat upon the poet's knee, as a bright innocent little child. Infinite pity, yet also infinite rigour of law: it is so Nature is made; it is so Dante discerned that she was made. What a paltry notion is that of his *Divine Comedy's*

being a poor splenetic impotent terrestrial libel; putting those into Hell whom he could not be avenged upon on earth! I suppose if ever pity, tender as a mother's, was in the heart of any man, it was in Dante's. But a man who does not know rigour cannot pity either. His very pity will be cowardly, egoistic,—sentimentality, or little better. I know not in the world an affection equal to that of Dante. It is a tenderness, a trembling, longing, pitying love: like the wail of Æolian harps, soft, soft; like a child's young heart;—and then that stern, sore-saddened heart! These longings of his towards his Beatrice; their meeting together in the *Paradiso*; his gazing in her pure transfigured eyes, her that had been purified by death so long, separated from him so far:—one likens it to the song of angels; it is among the purest utterances of affection, perhaps the very purest, that ever came out of a human soul.

“For the *intense* Dante is intense in all things; he has got into the essence of all. His intellectual insight as painter, on occasion too as reasoner, is but the result of all other sorts of intensity. Morally great, above all, we must call him; it is the beginning of all. His scorn, his grief are as transcendent as his love;—as indeed, what are they but the *inverse* or *converse* of his love? ‘*A Dio spiacenti ed a' nemici sui*,—Hateful to God and to the enemies of God:’ lofty scorn, unappeasable silent reprobation and aversion; ‘*Non ragioniam di lor*,’—We will not speak of *them*; look only and pass.’ Or think of this; ‘They have not the *hope* to die,—*Non hanno speranza di morte*.’ One day, it had risen sternly benign on the scathed heart of Dante, that he, wretched, never-resting, worn as he was, would full surely *die*; ‘that Destiny itself could not doom him not to die.’ Such words are in this man. For rigour, earnestness and depth, he is not to be paralleled in the modern world; to seek his parallel we must go into the Hebrew Bible, and live with the antique Prophets there.

“I do not agree with much modern criticism, in greatly preferring the *Inferno* to the two other parts of the *Divina Commedia*. Such preference belongs, I imagine, to our general Byronism of taste, and is like to be a transient feeling. The *Purgatorio* and *Paradiso*, especially the former, one would almost say, is even more excellent than it. It is a noble thing that *Purgatorio*, ‘Mountain of Purification;’ an emblem of the noblest conception of that age. If sin is so fatal, and Hell is and must be so rigorous, awful, yet in repentance too is man purified; Repentance is the grand Christian act. It is beautiful how Dante works it out. The *tremolar della marina*, that ‘trembling’ of the ocean-waves, under the first pure gleam of morning, dawning afar on the wandering Two, is as the type of an altered mood. Hope has now dawned; never-dying Hope, if in company still with heavy sorrow. The obscure sojourn of dæmons and reprobates is underfoot; a soft breathing of penitence mounts higher and higher, to the Throne of Mercy itself.”

"But indeed the Three compartments mutually support one another, are indispensable to one another. The *Paradiso*, a kind of inarticulate music to me, is the redeeming side of the *Inferno*; the *Inferno* without it were untrue. All three make up the true Unseen World, as figured in the Christianity of the Middle Ages; a thing for ever memorable, for ever true in the essence of it, to all men. It was perhaps delineated in no human soul with such depth of veracity as in this of Dante's; a man *sent* to sing it, to keep it long memorable. Very notable with what brief simplicity he passes out of the every-day reality, into the invisible one; and in the second or third stanza we find ourselves in the World of Spirits; and dwell there, as among things palpable, indubitable! To Dante they *were* so; the real world, as it is called, and its facts, was but the threshold to an infinitely higher Fact of a World. At bottom, the one was as *preternatural* as the other. Has not each man a soul? He will not only be a spirit, but is one. To the earnest Dante it is all one visible Fact; he believes it, sees it; is the Poet of it in virtue of that. Sincerity, I say again, is the saving merit, now as always."

"The uses of this Dante? We will not say much about his 'uses.' A human soul who has once got into that primal element of *Song*, and sung-forth fitly somewhat therefrom, has worked in the *depths* of our existence; feeding through long times the life-roots of all excellent human things whatsoever,—in a way that 'utilities' will not succeed well in calculating! We will not estimate the Sun by the quantity of gaslight it saves us; Dante shall be invaluable, or of no value."¹

V.

FRANCE.

ENGLAND was, as we have seen, the first among the nations of Europe to hold out the right hand of fellowship to the author of the *Commedia*, and to recognise his right to take his place among the great poets of the world. I know too little of early French literature to say whether there are any traces of a like recognition

¹ A few words are due to the labours of some Dante students whom I have not space to quote, but whose works are well worth consulting:—(1) Mr. J. A. Symond's *Introduction to the Study of Dante*; (2) Dr. H. C. Barlow, *Contributions to the Study of the Divina Commedia*; (3) Mrs. Oliphant's *Dante*; (4) the members of the Rossetti family, on whom, except as regards his special theory, the spirit of their father has descended in double measure—(a) D. G. Rossetti, *Dante and his Circle* and *Vita Nuova*; (b) Maria Rossetti, *Shadow of Dante*; (c) W. M. Rossetti, *Translation of the Inferno*.

there. France may, however, claim to have been the first nation that produced a translator ; not like Chaucer, of passages here and there, but of the whole of the great poem. In the year 1596 the Abbé Balthazar Grangier published "*La Comedie de Dante, de l'Enfer, du Purgatoire et du Paradis, mise en ryme françoise et comentée*," and dedicated it to Henry IV. As a specimen of the first translation of the *Commedia* into any modern European language, I quote the opening lines of *H. iii.* 1-9 :—

" Par mon moyen l'on va dans la cité dolente ;
Par mon moyen l'on va dans l'eternel desdain :
Par mon moyen l'on va parmy la gent meschante.

" La justice poussa mon fondateur hautain,
Et de ses mains me fit la divine puissance
L'amour qui fut premier et la grand' sapience.

" Créés devant moy, sinon les éternelles,
Les choses ne sont pas, et ie dure éternel ;
Delaissiez tout espoir vous qui entres rebelles."

The form chosen, as an approximation to the *terza rima*, is, it will be seen, a stanza of six lines, a quatrain terminated by a couplet. The notes are naturally taken chiefly from Italian commentators, of whom he names Landino. His own estimate of Dante, given in the Dedication, seems worth quoting :—

" En ce noble poëme il se decouvre un Poëte excellent, un Philosophe profond, et un Theologien judicieux, touchant avec un langage plus nerveux que mignard, toutefois obscurément, quasi toutes les plus belles matieres comprises aux sciences susdites. La façon de laquelle il use en ceste ditte Comedie est comme satyrique, attaquant toutes conditions de personnes, grandes ou petites."

Grangier aimed at a translation verse for verse and word for word, but his faithfulness took occasionally an eccentric form, and when he did not understand a passage, he transcribed it bodily into his version (*Rev. d. Deux Mondes*, Nov. 1840, p. 437). In the judgment of Saint René Taillandier : " Malgré ses grâces naïves et l'intérêt qui s'y attache, elle n'était guère de nature à populariser le grand Florentin." I have not found any external traces of its influence, but it may possibly have served to make the *Commedia* acceptable to English readers who were not Italian scholars.

It is at all events significant, as pointing to the temporary eclipse of Dante's fame which we have traced in Italy and England, that

nearly two centuries passed before the next version (this in prose) appeared from the pen of Moutonnet de Clairfons in 1776. The wars of the Fronde, the Renaissance classicality of the age of Louis XIV., the influence of the Jesuit reaction, were, it will easily be conceived, unfavourable to the study of a poet like Dante.

Voltaire, so far as I know, is the first writer who ventures on a critical estimate, and that estimate is sufficiently characteristic :—

“Vous voulez connaître le Dante. Les Italiens l'appellent divin : mais c'est une divinité cachée ; peu des gens entendent ses oracles : il a des commentateurs ; c'est peut-être encore une raison de plus pour n'être pas compris ; sa réputation s'affermira toujours parce qu'on ne le lit guère. Il y a de lui une vingtaine de traits qu'on sait par cœur : cela suffit pour s'épargner la peine d'examiner le reste.

“Ce divin Dante fut, dit on, un homme assez malheureux. Ne croyez pas qu'il fut divin de son temps, ni qu'il fut prophète chez lui.”

Then follows a short biography, with an account of his sojourn at Verona and Ravenna :—

“Ce fut dans ces divers lieux qu'il composa sa *Comédie de l'Enfer, du Purgatoire et du Paradis* : on a regardé le salmigondi comme un beau poème épique.”

Then, after a brief analysis of the opening cantos of the *Inferno*, he describes his entering the first circle of the condemned :—

“Le voyageur y reconnaît quelques cardinaux, quelques papes, et beaucoup de Florentins. Tout cela est-il dans le style comique ? Non. Tout est-il dans le genre héroïque ? Non. Dans quel goût est donc ce poème ? Dans un goût bizarre. . . . On a fondé une chaire, une lecture pour expliquer cet auteur classique. Vous me demanderez comment l'Inquisition entend raillerie en Italie ; elle sait bien que des plaisanteries en vers ne peuvent point faire de mal.”

By way of specimen of these “*plaisanteries*” he translates the episode of Guido di Montefeltro (*H.* xxvii.), or rather writes a Voltairean version of the story in the style of *La Pucelle*, interpolating, altering, and omitting at his will, and presents that as a “*traduction*” (*Dict. Phil. s. v. Dante*).

Symptoms of a revival began to appear in France, as in England, towards the close of the eighteenth century. In 1776 the *Inferno* was translated into prose by Moutonnet de Clairfons, and in 1783 by

De Rivarol, with notes. I have not seen the latter, and there is no copy in the library of the British Museum ; but it is said to have "des morceaux remplis de mouvement, de style, de hardiesse, d'*estro* italien qui font beaucoup d'honneur à Rivarol" (Artaud). More interesting for our present purpose is his estimate of the work which he translates, from which I quote a few passages :¹—

"Étrange et admirable entreprise ! Remonter du dernier gouffre des enfers, jusqu'à sublime sanctuaire des cieux ; embrasser la double hiérarchie des vices et des vertus, l'extrême misère et la suprême félicité, le temps et l'éternité, peindre à-la-fois l'ange et l'homme, l'auteur de tout mal, et le saint des saints. Aussi on ne peut se figurer la sensation prodigieuse que fit sur toute l'Italie ce poème national, rempli de hardiesses contre les Papes ; d'allusions aux événements récents et aux questions qui agitaient les esprits ; écrit d'ailleurs dans une langue au berceau, qui prenoit entre les mains de Dante une fierté qu'elle n'eût plus après lui et qu'on ne lui connoissait pas avant."

This indicates a somewhat greater capacity for entering into the mind of Dante than we have found in Voltaire, but he too is startled by the grotesqueness in which the *Inferno* is so rich :—

"D'ailleurs il n'est point de poète qui tende plus de pièges à son traducteur ; c'est presque toujours des bizarreries, des énigmes ou des horreurs qu'il lui propose ; il entasse les comparaisons les plus dégoûtantes, les allusions, les termes de l'école, et les expressions les plus basses : rien ne lui paroît méprisable, et la langue française, chaste et timorée, s'effarouche à chaque phrase. . . . Ce mélange d'événements si invraisemblables et de couleurs si vraies fait tout le magie de son poème. . . . Son vers se tient debout par le seule force du substantif et du verbe, sans le concours d'une seule épithète. . . . La plupart de ses peintures ont encore aujourd'hui la force de l'antique et la fraîcheur du moderne, et peuvent être comparées à ces tableaux d'un coloris sombre et effrayant, qui sortoient des ateliers des Michel-Ange et des Carraches, et donnoient à des sujets empruntés de la religion une sublimité qui parloit à tous les yeux."

He laments the incapacity of the eighteenth century to enter into the spirit of the *Commedia* :—

"Au reste, ce poème ne pouvoit paroître dans des circonstances plus malheureuses : nous sommes trop près ou trop loin de son sujet. Le Dante parloit à des esprits religieux, pour qui ses paroles étoient des

¹ I take them from the longer extract in the *Illustrations to the Paradiso* given by Longfellow.

paroles de vie, et qui l'entendoient à demi-mot : mais il semble qu'aujourd'hui on ne puisse plus traiter les grands sujets mystiques d'une manière sérieuse. Si jamais, ce qu'il n'est pas permis de croire, notre théologie devenoit une langue morte, et s'il aimoit qu'elle obtînt comme la mythologie, les honneurs de l'antique ; alors le Dante inspireroit une autre espèce de l'intérêt : son poème s'élèveroit comme un grand monument au milieu des ruines des littératures et des religions : il seroit plus facile à cette postérité reculée, de s'accommoder des peintures sérieuses du poète, et de se pénétrer de la véritable terreur de son enfer : on se feroit Chrétien avec le Dante, comme on se fait payen avec Homère."

About the third decade of the present century, however, an impulse was given to Dante literature in France more or less analogous to that which we have traced in connexion with Rosmini, Manzoni, and Silvio Pellico in Italy, and with the Oxford movement in England. Rivarol's melancholy criticism, that the *Commedia* could not be rightly studied or appreciated till the theology of Christendom had become a thing of the past, was to be tested by a crucial experiment. It was in the movement of what may be called the Neo-Catholicism of France, neither Gallican nor Ultramontane, but aiming at an ideal which should reconcile the claims of liberty and science with loyalty to the faith of Christendom as represented by the teaching of the Latin Church, that Dante found a new company of devout scholars and admirers. The group of men who were prominent in that movement included many illustrious names—Montalembert, Lacordaire, Ampère, Ozanam ; as sympathising with it for a time, De Lamartine and the Abbé de Lamennais ; as connected with it by literary rather than theological affinities, Fauriel and Quinet. It is noteworthy that nearly every one of those I have named did something to bring the name of Dante before the minds of their countrymen, or to give them the power of entering into his mind and heart with a fuller knowledge of his environment. Montalembert, in his *Monks of the West, from St. Benedict to St. Bernard*, led his readers to feel the power of the monastic spirit by which the poet was so largely influenced. De Lamennais, though at a later period he threw off his allegiance to the Church which he had hoped to reform according to his ideal, completed a prose translation into French, which was published in his *Ceuvres Posthumes*, 1856. In the preface he gives an estimate which seems to show traces of the influence both of Ozanam and

Rossetti. On the one hand, he accepts the theory of the latter that both the *Commedia* and the *Canzoniere* were written in a *gergo*, or cypher-language, intelligible only to the initiated; that Love represents not the classical Cupid or an ideal passion, but the principle of Ghibellinism; that the *fideles amoris* are, therefore, Ghibelline conspirators, and presses with some force the analogy of the Shulamite in the *Song of Solomon*, of Diotima in the *Symposium* of Plato, of Zuleika and Leila in the mystic poetry of Persia, in favour of that method of interpretation. On the other hand, he agrees with Ozanam in looking on Dante as a strictly orthodox follower of Aquinas. The notes to the poem are comparatively poor, and add little to one's knowledge.

A few passages more or less striking may be cited from the introduction :—

“Le poème entier, sous ses nombreux aspects, politique, philosophique, théologique, offre le tableau complet d'une époque des doctrines reçues, de la science vraie ou erronée, du mouvement de l'esprit, des passions, des mœurs, de la vie enfin dans tous les ordres, et c'est avec raison qu'à ce point de vue la *Divina Commedia* a été appelée un poème encyclopédique.”

It differs in this respect from the epics of Homer, Virgil, and Milton, with their well-defined subjects, complete within comparatively narrow limits. Dante's subject, however, immense as is its range, embracing all theology and all known history, this world and the world to come, has yet its own limitations :—

“Dans cette conception, Dante toutefois ne pouvait dépasser les limites où son siècle était enfermé. Son épopée est tout un monde, mais un monde correspondant au développement de la pensée et de la société en un point des temps et sur un point de la terre, le monde du Moyen Age.”

Of Dante's language he writes :—

“La netteté et la précision, je ne sais quoi de bref et de pittoresque, la distinguent particulièrement. Elle reflète, en quelque façon, le génie de Dante, nerveux, concis, ennemi de la phrase, abrégant tout, faisant passer du son esprit dans les autres esprits, de son âme dans les autres âmes, idées, sentiments, images, par une sorte de directe communication presque indépendante des paroles. . . . C'est qu'il ne cherche point l'effet lequel naît de soi-même par l'expression vraie de ce que le poète a pensé, senti. Jamais rien de vague; ce qu'il peint, il le voit, et son style plein de relief est moins encore de la peinture que de la plastique.

"Lorsque parût son œuvre, ce fut parmi ses contemporains un cri unanime d'étonnement et d'admiration. Puis de siècles se passent, durant lesquels peu à peu s'obscurcit cette grande renommée. Le sens du poème était perdu, le goût rétréci et dépravé par l'influence d'une littérature non moins vide que factice."

He then quotes Voltaire's estimate, and appreciates it at its right value.

"Voltaire, que ni savait guère mieux l'italien que le grec, a jugé Dante comme il a jugé Homère, sans les entendre et sans les connaître. Il n'eut, d'ailleurs, jamais le sentiment ni de la haute antiquité, ni de tout ce qui sortait du cercle dans lequel les modernes avaient renfermé l'art. Avec un goût délicat et sûr, il discernait certaines beautés. D'autres lui échappaient. La nature l'avait doué d'une vue nette, mais cette vue n'embrassait qu'un horizon borné."

He adds, as from the standpoint of his own new conviction, that a "secret instinct" is leading men to substitute other thoughts for those of a system which the progress of thought and science has made effete, but that, whatever may be the doctrines which replace it, they too in their turn will be found to be the source of all true poetry, whose life is the life of the spirit.

We are tempted, when we find the name of Auguste Comte among the devout students of Dante, to ask: "Is Saul also among the prophets?" Yet so it was. Among the strange anomalies of that eccentric genius we note the fact that he looked on the daily reading of a canto of the *Commedia* and a chapter of the *De Imitatione* as an almost essential element in the spiritual self-culture of the Religion of Humanity.

Of others, who did not renounce their first love, as De Lamennais, it may be sufficient to name Ampère, in whose *La Grèce, Rome et Dante*, we have the records of the pilgrimage of a devout worshipper to every place that had been made sacred by its association with Dante's life,¹ and Fauriel, who having qualified himself by a long series of labours in the history of Southern Gaul, of the crusade against the Albigenses, of Provençal poetry, published, in the first volume of his *Dante et les Origines de la Langue et de la Littérature Italienne*, an admirable biography of the poet, the work of a cultivated, intelligent, and reverent thinker, which may well

¹ The *Voyage Dantesque* is well worth reading, and I may note a series of papers of a like nature, yet more interesting, written by Sarah F. Clarke under the title of *Notes on the Exile of Dante* in the *Century* magazine for 1882.

hold its own even in face of the works of like nature by Scartazzini and Wegele.

But of all those whose devotion to Dante was united with the revival of aspirations after a life of holiness, as the fruit of a religious philosophy and a religion that could incorporate with itself whatever truth was brought to light by the advancing knowledge of the time, I know none whose character is at once so lofty and so winning as is that of Frederic Ozanam. In not a few points it seems to me to present a parallel to that of Antonio Rosmini.¹ There is the same devout reverence for father and for mother, the same sensitiveness of conscience, the same aptitude for appreciating systems of philosophical or religious thought, the same stainless purity of life. There, we might have said, with hardly the shadow of a risk of error, is a soul capable of entering into Dante's mind, certain to be attracted by it. And so it was. The earlier letters of the student soon give traces of the attraction. He visits Assisi and quotes *Par.* xi. 45-51 (p. 175). He enters on the work by which he was to be best known, his essay on *Dante et la Philosophie Catholique*, just at the time when he was passing through the heaviest sorrows of his life (p. 241). He accepts the tradition that Dante had studied at Paris, and wonders whether Sigier was the Cousin of his time (p. 218). His work is to him "as a sweet and voluntary servitude," which, as his journey to Rome had done, "enchains his soul among ruins" (p. 228). He is encouraged by Lacordaire to continue his labours (p. 242). Silvio Pellico welcomes what he has said as to the "thorough Catholic philosophy of the great poet as the most exact truth," and repudiates the "unhappy writers, contrary to the Church, who, blinded by their prejudices, have tried to make of Dante one of their patriarchs" (p. 246). On the strength of what he has thus written he is invited by Fauriel to share his work as Professor of Foreign Literature in the Sorbonne (p. 285).

The object of Ozanam's work was, as its title shows, to vindicate the character of Dante as a Christian philosopher, and this leads him to a full comparison of his teaching with that of Aquinas, such as had been followed out by Hettinger in Germany, and in

¹ I derive my knowledge from the translation of Ozanam's *Letters* by Ainslie Coates (1886). It may be hoped that the translator will complete his work as a second volume, the first stopping just in the most interesting part of Ozanam's career.

England by Mr. A. J. Butler in his notes to his translation of the *Paradiso*. Like Dean Church's essay, the work is too complete to lend itself readily to quotations, but it is not too much to say that it is well-nigh indispensable to any one who wishes to enter into the deep things of the *Commedia*, and to understand Dante's attitude to the mysteries of the faith. It embodies the results of a vast range of studies. It is lighted up here and there by pregnant thoughts embodied in epigrammatic language.

For him, the homage paid to Dante by the Florence of our own time is of the nature of a "*culte expiatoire*." He recognises the fact that Dante, though Aristotelian, is a Platonist in the essence of his thoughts, and so finds in him the reconciliation of the two (pp. 213-223). Dante is the "St. Thomas of poetry." He applies to the *Commedia* words that were written with a far different purpose, and describes it as

"The child of love, though born in bitterness
And nurtured in convulsions."

His ideal interpretation of the *Vita Nuova* leads him even to speak of Beatrice as having died "*dans la gloire éclatante de sa virginité*." Nor was this Ozanam's only contribution to Dante studies. We owe to him the publication, in an appendix to his work of a *Vision of St. Paul*, throwing light on *H. ii*, another volume on *Les Poètes Franciscains en Italie, séries des recherches nouvelles sur les sources poétiques de la Divine Comédie* (1859).

Lamartine, as Ozanam's letters show, was at one time looked up to by the Neo-Catholic party. His books were "beautiful and good;" his political ideas "great and generous." He was at once a "philosopher and a poet." Ozanam had rarely seen a man "unite more noble qualities" (p. 115). There were elements in Lamartine's character, however, chiefly an inordinate egotism, which soon threw him out of sympathy with these admirers. When he published his *Voyage en Orient*, Ozanam then began to feel that there was a "little rift" that threatened to widen into a chasm. He was "so impressionable, that in traversing Asia he was impregnated, in part, with its ideas and tendencies." He gave "extreme praises to the Alcoran," and evidently was "departing from orthodoxy." All that could be said by those who would fain hope for the best was that his book contained no formal apostasy (p. 135).

What he wrote a few years later on Dante must have made the breach irreparable. He confessedly follows in the footsteps of Voltaire, and speaks in the accents of Leigh Hunt and Landor:—

“L'œuvre, jadis intelligible et populaire, aujourd'hui ténébreuse et inexplicable, résiste, comme le sphinx, aux interrogations des érudits, il n'en subsiste que des fragments plus semblables à des énigmes qu'à des monuments.

“Pour comprendre le Dante, il faudrait ressusciter toute la populace Florentine de son époque ; car ce sont ses croyances, ses haines, ses popularités et ses impopularités qu'il a chantées. Il est puni par où il a péché : il a chanté pour la place publique, la postérité ne le comprend pas.

“Tout ce qu'on peut comprendre, c'est que le poème exclusivement Toscan du Dante étoit une espèce de satire vengeresse du poète et de l'homme d'état contre les hommes et le partis aux quels il avait voué sa haine. L'idée étoit mesquine et indigne du poète. La génie n'est pas un jouet mis au service de nos petites colères ; c'est un don de Dieu qu'on peut profaner en le ravalant à des petitesesses.”

He knows that he will shock the feelings of a whole literary school, but he claims, on the strength of having lived for some years in Italy, to be more competent to judge than they are. He sneers at Ozanam and his companions:—

“De jeunes Français se sont évertués maintenant à poursuivre ce qui a lassé les Toscans eux-mêmes. Que le Dieu de Chaos leur soit propice !

“Quant à nous, nous n'avons trouvé, comme Voltaire, dans le Dante, qu'un grand inventeur de style, un grand créateur de langue égaré dans une conception de ténèbres, un immense fragment de poète dans un petit nombre de fragments de vers gravés, plutôt qu'écrits avec le ciseau de ce Michel Ange de la poésie ; une trivialité grossière qui descend jusqu'au cynisme du mot, et jusqu'à la crapule de l'image ; une quintessence de théologie scholastique qui s'élève jusqu'à la vaporisation de l'idée ; enfin pour tout dire d'un mot, un grand homme et un mauvais livre.”

The enthusiastic devotion that characterised the “romantic” school to which Ozanam belonged was wanting in an Edgar Quinet, and in its place we have a clear-visioned insight, and a calm though reverential estimate. I quote from *Les Révolutions d'Italie*, chap. vii.:—

“Comme dans chaque détail d'une cathédrale vous retrouvez le caractère de l'ensemble, de même dans chaque partie du poème de

Dante vous retrouvez en abrégé toutes les autres. . . . Il y a dans l'enfer des éclairs d'une joie perdue qui rappellent et retrouvent le Paradis ; il y a dans le Paradis des plaintes lamentables, des prophéties de malheur comme si le firmament lui même s'abîmait dans le gouffre, et que l'extrême douleur ressaisît l'homme au sein de l'extrême joie.

"Diviser par fragments le poème de Dante, comme on le fait ordinairement, c'est le méconnaître ; il faut au moins suivre une fois, tout d'une haleine, le poète dans ces trois mondes qui se touchent, embrasser d'un seul regard l'horizon des ténèbres et de la lumière, suivre le chemin de la torture qui mène à la félicité, recueillir tous les échos de douleur et de joie qui s'appellent sans trouver de réponse, et placé au sommet du poème, s'orienter dans la cité du Dieu et du Démon : il faut entendre une fois le *miserere* des damnés dans les fleuves de sang, en même temps que l'hosannah des bienheureux, puisque c'est de ce mélange que se forme l'accord complet de la *Comédie Divine*.

"Qu'est-ce donc que la *Comédie Divine* ? L'Odyssée du Chrétien ; un voyage dans l'infini, mêlé d'angoisses et des chants des sirènes ; un itinéraire de l'homme vers Dieu."

The name of M. Charles Labitte is chiefly memorable for the contribution he has made to Dante studies in his articles in the *Revue des Deux Mondes*, subsequently published in a volume with the title *La Divine Comédie avant Dante*, and in the study on the *Genesis and Growth of the Commedia* I have acknowledged my indebtedness to that work. It lies in the nature of the case, however, that a man could not accomplish such a work without dwelling, more or less, on the relation of the poet to the predecessors whose works are analysed with so exhaustive a fulness, and one suggestive paragraph may well be quoted as a sample :—

"On ne dispute plus à Dante le rôle inattendu du conquérant intellectuel que son génie a su se créer tout à coup au milieu de la barbarie des temps. L'auteur de la *Divine Comédie* n'est pas pour rien le représentant poétique du moyen âge. Place comme au carrefour de cette ère étrange, toutes les routes mènent à lui, et sans cesse on le retrouve à l'horizon. Société, intelligence, religion, tout se reflète en lui. En philosophie il complète Saint Thomas ; en histoire il est le commentateur vivant de Villani ; le secret des sentiments et des tristesse d'alors se lit dans son poème. C'est un homme complet, à la manière des écrivains de l'antiquité : il tient l'épée d'une main, la plume de l'autre ; il est savant, il est diplomate, il est grand poète. Son œuvre est un des plus vaste monuments de l'esprit humain ; sa vie est un combat ; rien n'y manque, les larmes, la faim, l'exil, l'amour, les gloires, les faiblesses. Et remarquez que les intervalles de son inspira-

tion, que le sauvage dureté de son caractère, que l'aristocratie hautaine de son génie, sont des traits de plus qui le rattachent à son époque, et qui en même temps l'en separent et l'isolent. Où que vous portiez vos pas dans les landes ingrates du moyen âge, cette figure, à la fois sombre et lumineuse, apparaît à vos côtés comme un guide inévitable."

M. Labitte writes, however, as having little or no sympathy with Ozanam and his friends :—

" Sans dont il y a sympathie en nous pour ce passé, mais nous sentons bien que c'est du passé. Soyons franc : la fibre érudite est ici autant en jeu que la fibre poétique, la curiosité est aussi éveillée que l'admiration. On est frappé de ces catacombes gigantesques, mais on sait qu'elles sont l'asile de la mort. En un mot, nous comprenons, nous expliquons, nous commentons : nous ne croyons plus. . . . Hélas ! ce qui nous frappe surtout dans la *Divine Comédie*, ce sont les beaux vers. Aussi, rien ne fait du livre de Dante le poème de notre époque."

M. Labitte has, however, a special claim to distinction as a writer on Dante, as having given a characteristic analysis of the *Vita Nuova*, which had just been translated for the first time into French by M. Delecluze :—

" C'est le premier en effet de ces livres maladifs et consacrés à la subtile analyse d'une faiblesse, d'un penchant, d'une passion ; c'est l'aîné de cette famille de Werther, de René, d'Obermann, d'Adolphe qui seront un produit, particulier et vraiment distinctif, des littératures modernes. Ces types vagues, souffrants, exaltés, dans lesquels des générations entières se reconnaissent, étaient à peu près ignorés avant le Christianisme.

" L'amour explique bien des choses dans la vie Italienne ; il explique tout un côté du génie de Dante. C'est chez lui un sentiment tout nouveau, épuré par le Christianisme, et où viennent se marier et se fondre par la poésie les souvenirs platoniques, la galanterie des cours d'amour et de la chevalerie, avec le mysticisme scholastique des théologiens. On est bien loin des roses de Tibulle, du moineau de Lesbie, et Anacréon ne reconnaîtrait plus cet amour, *vêtu de drap noir* (Sonn. xxiv.) qui ne sait que répéter : ' Elle est morte, ma dame est morte. ' "

Of all the eccentricities of Dante exegesis, M. Aroux's *Dante Hérétique, Révolutionnaire et Socialiste* is perhaps almost and altogether the most eccentric. Its title sufficiently announces the thesis which he undertakes to maintain. But there is something touching in his account of the way in which he was led to his conclusions. He had studied Dante for ten years, and in 1842 had published a translation, as he pathetically confesses,

without understanding him. He set to work again to revise his task, and his eyes were opened. A leading idea came before him which all subsequent studies confirmed and developed. He adopted—apparently by an independent process of inquiry, as he makes no mention of his predecessor—Rossetti's theory of a cypher-language. The *Vita Nuova* is the history of a secret Ghibelline society. The philosophy of Dante is that of Averrhoes; his theology that of the Abbot Joachim, the Fraticelli, the Cathari, the Paterini; of Fra Dolcino, of Manichæan and Albigensian heretics. The *invidiosi veri* of Sigier were that the world was eternal, that Christianity was a fable, that its doctrines were a hindrance to true knowledge, that the only wise men were the pantheistic philosophers, to whom faith was a thing indifferent (p. 6). The "ladies who have intelligence of love" (*Canz.* ii.) are "the chiefs of the Ghibelline sect, initiated in the highest degrees of the secret doctrine" (p. 45).

"Béatrice, disons-le de suite, est une entité métaphysique, elle est l'ensemble des doctrines syncrétiques de la Gnosis et de Manés repoussées, anathématisées par l'Église; doctrine constituant la foi hétérodoxe, aux mystères de laquelle Dante avait été initié avec tant d'autres, que l'autorité ecclésiastique, si formidable alors pour qui s'attaquait à elle, base et sauvegarde de la société, réduisait à s'entourer de ténèbres. Béatrice est l'essence même de ces doctrines, leur philosophie, dont l'âme de Dante est imbue; elle est son âme elle-même, ne formant qu'un avec l'objet aimé. Cette âme, il l'a personnifiée, il en a fait une trinité, en lui donnant intelligence, mémoire et volonté, en l'appelant Béatrice, Marie, et Lucie, puis il l'a fait parler et agir comme un être réel, en se complaisant dans son œuvre, en la contemplant en dehors de lui-même; cette personification il en est l'auteur, le *facteur*, elle est un miracle assurément, miracle d'audace, de ruse diabolique et de génie; tout dans le temple qu'il lui a édifié n'est que miracles, et c'est Dante, homme créé à l'image de Dieu, triple et un, comme lui, par l'intelligence, la volonté, et la mémoire, c'est Dante que est le *facteur des miracles*; comme il est le Père, le Fils et l'esprit de Béatrice, en qui il contemple sa sisygie, son Ennoia, son entéléchie, son *logos* ou son verbe."

That specimen may, I think, suffice. There is something edifying in the way in which, with this master-key in his hand, he leads his reader step by step, through all the poet's writings, opens all the secret treasures of wisdom and knowledge, reads between the lines whatever he was resolved to find there, and so remorselessly tears

away the veil which had for six centuries concealed the features of the great heretic, the great revolutionist, one might almost say, the Antichrist, of the fourteenth century. Ozanam and his friends are, from his point of view, blinded and self-deceived by their fanaticism. He does not name them, indeed, but they are clearly in his mind when he speaks of—

“Les fanatiques du grand poëte, ceux qui s’agenouilleraient volontiers devant chaque mot tombé de la plume du digne et pieux Dante que nous connaissons . . . bon Catholique ; plein de dévotion pour la Sainte Vierge et affilié au tiers ordre de Saint François.”

He has fathomed the mystery of iniquity ; he will follow up his task by a new translation of the *Commedia* with new notes. Meantime he, as a faithful son of the Church, dedicates his book to Pius IX., as a “protestation contre l’erreur et le mensonge que le genie même ne saurait absoudre.”

I have no means of ascertaining how the Pope received the book for which the sanction of his name was thus invoked. The letter of Cardinal Manning commending Father Bowden’s translation of Hettinger’s work (p. 455), which in fact reproduces Ozanam, is a sufficient proof that it has not found adherents among the leading representatives of Latin Catholicism. Pius IX. himself gave a practical answer to it when he laid a votive wreath on Dante’s tomb at Ravenna.

The *Causeries Florentines* of M. Klackzo, a work of the type of Sir Arthur Helps’s *Friends in Council*, presents some discussions of points in Dante’s character and poems which will interest most students. The defect of the book is, as it seems to me, that it is too epigrammatic. The turn of a pointed phrase seems to have a fascination for the author which he cannot resist, even when it leads him to an untenable paradox. Some of the epigrams are, however, sufficiently suggestive, and I quote them as they meet me.

Dante is the representative “de toute la grande confrérie de la Passion”—“le saint patron *della città dolente* des poëtes et des artistes”—“un Titan foudroyé par le destin.” . . . The words “*In dolore paries*” find their fulfilment in Michael Angelo and Dante. . . . The influence of Dante is traceable in Orcagna, Giotto, Fiesole (Fra Angelico), but not in Michael Angelo’s “Last Judgment.” . . . Dante is in all things the antithesis of Michael Angelo, reproducing all traditional lore, while the latter discards it. . . . The *Commedia* is the one great completed work of the Middle Ages, in this happier than Cologne Cathedral or the *Summa*

of Aquinas. . . . The *Commedia*, like a Gothic cathedral, is best seen in the moonlight of the soul. . . . Dante's influence is scarcely traceable in Italian literature. The amorous servitude of late Italian poetry has led to political servitude. . . . The *Inferno* makes a plastic impression, the *Purgatorio* a pictorial, the *Paradiso* a musical. The first is characterised by its *bestiarium*, the second by its *flora*, the last by its stars. . . . "La Beatrice des sonnets nous fait l'irritante impression de l'anonyme, et de l'enigme, du masque et du mythe, d'une personnalité fictive, je dirais presque une entité hérétique." . . . Dante is the Homer of Catholicism—"le Newton poétique du monde surnaturel."

I end with a few words from Victor Hugo, sufficiently characteristic, which, however, I have been unable to trace to their source: "He knocks gravely at the door of the Infinite, and says 'Open, I am Dante.'"¹

VI.

GERMANY.

THE comparatively late date at which Germany took its place in the commonwealth of European literature confines our present inquiry within correspondingly narrow limits. The first volume of Scartazzini's elaborate *Dante in Germania* is an imperial octavo of 312 pages, and of these pp. 9-31 contain all that has to be said on the subject, after an exhaustive and almost microscopic study, from the fourteenth century to 1824. The name of Dante occurs in Sebastian Brant's (b. 1458, d. 1521) edition of *Æsop's Fables*, but without any evidence that his works were known. A treatise *De Dignitatibus*, by Bartolo da Sassoferrato, was published at Leipzig in 1493, dealing fully with the Canzone which forms the subject of the fourth book of the *Convito* (Canz. xvi.) Flacius Illyricus, one of the most vehement leaders of the Lutheran Reformation, published at Basle (1556) a *Catalogus Testium Veritatis*, in which Dante holds a prominent position, and all the passages in the *Commedia* and the *De Monarchiâ* which bear on the corruptions of the Roman Church are quoted in the original. It is significant enough that the same city witnessed in 1559 the publication of a German translation of the latter treatise by

¹ A friend (C. J. P.) calls my attention to a passage in Victor Hugo's Preface to *Les Rayons et les Ombres* in which he says that "the Bible has been his book, Virgil and Dante his masters."

Heroldt, before any edition of the book had been printed in Italy. A short biographical notice based upon Boccaccio, in which the reader was told that Dante had written of Hell and Purgatory and Paradise and "many other beautiful things," may have tended to awaken an interest other than polemical. Anyhow, the next welcome is given as by a poet to a poet only or chiefly, not by reformer to reformer. In 1563 Hans Sachs, the shoemaker-poet of Nuremberg (*b.* 1494, *d.* 1576), tells the tale of Dante's life. The words of that welcome will be read, I think, with some interest as the first indication of the place which some three centuries later the poet of Florence was to hold in the minds of the thinkers and scholars of Germany. I give, I hope, a fairly adequate version :¹ —

" Alighierius, known as Dante,
Famous as a laureate poet,
In the town of Florence dwelt he,
Much by men revered and honoured,
But by troop of foes most bitter
Was his fair fame foully slandered.
From the city him they banished :
Then at Paris long he tarried,
Student in the famous college.
There of Art he was the master,
Bard and poet nobly gifted.
Many a wondrous poem wrote he,
Notably a book that telleth,
With all full and subtle detail,
Things of Earth and Hell and Heaven ;
These with artist's skill he painteth,
With keen insight gazing round him :
Poem that, still held in honour,
Studied much by many a scholar :
Then from France he took his journey,
And Can Grande gave him shelter."

There is nothing very lofty or in the grand style there. I do not think it probable that the writer knew more of Dante than he learnt from Heroldt's book, but the words have an honest ring in them, and show that he looked on the poet rather than the controversialist, and gave his greeting to the *sovrano poeta* as one who was a greater *Meistersinger* than he or any of his forerunners could claim to be.

¹ *Opp. Nar.* 1579, v. 2. The title of the poem is *Dantes, der Poet von Florenz*.
VOL. II.

As it was, however, the poet remained in the background of German thought, and Dante was still chiefly known as the author of the *De Monarchiâ*. Of that book four more editions were published between 1609 and 1618, while as yet not a single copy had issued from any Italian press.

The year 1755 was memorable for the first edition of the *Commedia* in Germany, edited by Niccolò Ciangulo and published at Leipzig, and, as a natural sequel, a volume of *Essays on the Character and Works of the Chief Italian Poets* by J. N. Meinhard (Berlin, 1763), in which 180 pages were given, it is said, with a fair measure of knowledge and insight, to those of Dante. The work was favourably reviewed by Lessing. That critic, however, though he quotes *H. ii. 7-9* in a criticism on Klopstock (*Lett. ii. 17*, p. 254, ed. 1841), does not appear to have been familiar with his writings, and has left nothing in the shape of an estimate. If he had, we may fear, looking to the dominant characteristics of the man, that it would have been somewhat after the manner of Voltaire.

In the matter of translation, however, Germany had the start of England in the prose version of the whole *Commedia* by Bachenschwanz in 1767, of the *Inferno* by Jageman in 1780. They have passed, as Boyd and Rogers have passed in England, into the region of oblivion, having done their little work of at least bringing the name of Dante within the horizon of German students. In spite of this, however, no trace of the Florentine poet is found in Schiller, not even in the prose writings, such as the essays on art, poetry or culture generally, in which such a reference to them would have naturally suggested itself to one who was acquainted with the poet's writings.¹ With Schiller's greater contemporary, there was in the earlier stages of his growth, the same absence of any reference to the poet of whom men now debate whether he or Goethe were the greatest, whom all admit to have been the representative poet of the *Zeitgeist* of his own time, as Goethe was partly of that of the eighteenth, yet more of that of the nineteenth century. The *Italienische Reise*, written *circ. 1790*, show no trace of any wish to halt at Florence or Ravenna for the sake of the memories which made those cities sacred, and the traveller presses on to the classical and artistic interests of Rome and Naples. Even at

¹ Scartazzini calls attention (p. 20) to the curious fact that Schiller and Goethe correspond in February 1798 on the merits of *terza rima* as a form for poetry, and that neither of them mentions Dante.

Assisi he turns from the two churches with all their memories of St. Francis and Giotto without a word of notice, and hastens with a passionate classicalism to the Temple of Minerva, which stands in the piazza of that town. The mind of Goethe had, at an early age, cast off the traditional Protestantism of Germany. It had scarcely felt even the touch of artistic sympathy with the Catholicism of an earlier period, still less of any real reverence for the truths of which it was for a time the representative. He gave himself, eliminating the thought of God, eliminating any real sympathy with humanity, to the work which he pursued consistently through a long and prosperous life of self-culture. No two types of life and character could be more contrasted than those of the two poets of Weimar and of Florence. The former, like the latter, takes his place among the creative master-spirits of the world. He pursued his lonely pathway through the *avia Pieridum loca*, and wrote things hard to be understood. The *Faust* and the *Commedia* have this at least in common, that each is an instance of Goethe's own maxim that all great works are the growth of solitude; that each is the outcome of a man's life; that this is what he has to say as to the riddles of the world in which he lives. The last word of Dante, after a passionate and unselfish love, after devotion to a political ideal of righteousness, after accepting the faith of Christ and following it into all its traditional and scholastic developments, after claiming fellowship with the saints of God and with sinners who repented, after a life of poverty and exile, was found in the *Paradiso*. The last word of Goethe, after the wide experience of passions that were, to say the least, not unselfish, after the placid ease of Weimar, with scarcely a touch of a self-forgetting love of country or of mankind, or of individual men and women, from first to last, is found in the second part of *Faust*.¹

And the outcome of this antipathetic nature, when the name of Dante was brought into prominence by the writers of the so-called "Romantic" school, of whom I shall have next to speak, was seen in the tone of bitterness and scorn with which Goethe always speaks of the author of the *Commedia*. It is from first to last

¹ The closing scene of the *Faust* seems almost a deliberate travesty of the *Paradiso*, just as the opening scene is of the Prologue to the Book of Job, Gretchen taking the place of Beatrice.

an echo of the words with which the Epicureans of all ages have spoken of the followers after righteousness :—

“He professeth to have the knowledge of God, and he calleth himself the child of the Lord. He was made to reprove our thoughts. He is grievous unto us even to behold; for his life is not like other men’s, his ways are of another fashion.”—*Wisd. Sol.*, ii. 13-15.

When at Rome in May 1787, he summed up his judgment of the *Commedia* in the words that the “*Inferno* was abominable, the *Purgatorio* doubtful, the *Paradiso* tiresome” (Scart., *Germ.*, i. p. 20). In his *Conversations with Eckermann*, he shows his scholar a bust of Dante and says that “he looks as if he came out of Hell” (i. 118). “To you,” he added, “the study of this poet is absolutely forbidden by your father-confessor.” His “rhyme system,” he says elsewhere, “made him unintelligible; he was not a *talent*, but a *nature*” (i. 120). He says of him in words which, though true, seem to be disparaging in their intent, that “though he appears great to us, he has the culture of centuries behind him” (ii. 27).

To pass from the titanic power, not without its demonic element, of the poet of Weimar to the men of letters who were grouped as the Romantic school, is to descend to a lower level. To them, however, it was, much more than to him, that Germany was indebted for the first introduction of the name and fame of Dante. A. W. Von Schlegel, who won an early fame by his translation of Shakespeare (1797-1810), appeared also at a still earlier date (1795) as a translator of selected portions of each cantique of the *Commedia*, and wrote an essay on Dante in Bürger’s *Academie der Schöner Redekunste*. These I have not seen, but his *Lectures on Dramatic Literature* delivered at Vienna in 1808, though the subject did not bring the works of Dante directly within his horizon, show that he was familiar with the *Commedia* and looked on it with a loving and reverent appreciation, of which I select a few examples. He has been speaking of the imitation of the Greek and Latin classics which characterised the earlier *renaissance* :—

“With the great poets and artists it was otherwise. However strong their enthusiasm for the ancients, and however determined their purpose of entering into competition with them, they were compelled by their independence and originality of mind to strike out a path of their own,

and to impress upon their productions the stamp of their own genius. Such was the case with Dante among the Italians, the father of modern poetry. Acknowledging Virgil for his master, he has produced a work which, of all others, most differs from the *Æneid*, and, in our opinion, far excels its pretended model in power, truth, compass, and profundity" (p. 20, ed. Bohn).

In another passage (p. 80) he notes that Æschylus, "in the singular strangeness of his images and language, resembles Dante and Shakespeare." He couples Dante with Homer as instances of "high cultivation and practice in art," even in the poets, who are usually looked on as "children of nature, devoid of art or school discipline" (p. 359). He finds in Dante, as in Shakespeare, "a profound view of the inward life of nature and her mysterious being" (p. 396).¹

In Frederick Von Schlegel, in whom the reverence for the past and the yearning after something wider and deeper than the popular Lutheranism of Germany led to his conversion to the Church of Rome, we have less of the mere man of letters, and more of the profound thinker than in his brother. In his *Philosophy of History* he comes across the union of the "tendency towards the absolute" which characterised "the art and poetry as well as the science of the Middle Age" with the fantastic spirit which in various forms mingled with it and them:—

"The singular manner, indeed, in which the Italian poet Dante has, in his mighty poem of visions, wherein he displays the most masterly and classical condensation of language and the profoundest poetical art, contrived to sustain, in his progress through the three regions of the invisible world, that fantastic spirit, next, the stern maxim of the Ghibelline state policy and a congenial worship of Roman antiquity, and has managed to unite all these qualities with the subtle distinctions of the scholastic philosophy. This singular manner, indeed, has never been an object of general imitation, nor has it opened a path to the subsequent labours of art. But this work will ever remain an extraordinary, wonderful, and characteristic monument, wherein the peculiar spirit of this first scholastico-romantic epoch of European art and science is displayed in a most remarkable manner."

The *Cosmos* of Alexander Von Humboldt presents a testimony of a different kind, from one who was a man of science rather than a

¹ In 1803 A. W. Schlegel translated several of the Minor Poems, and in a paper in the German *Athenæum* (circ. 1798-1800) groups Dante, Shakespeare, and Goethe as "the *trifolium* of modern poetry;" the first of the three being recognised as the "prophet of Catholicism."

man of letters. His plan led him to dwell on the effect of the visible universe in drawing out the powers and emotions of man's mind, and he notes the supreme excellence which, in this respect, is manifested in Dante as an observer:—

“When the glory of the Aramaic Greek and Roman dominion—or, I might almost say, when the ancient world had passed away, we find in the great and inspired founder of a new era, Dante Alighieri, occasional manifestations of the deepest sensibility to the charms of the terrestrial life of Nature, whenever he abstracts himself from the passionate and subjective control of that despondent mysticism which constituted the general circle of his ideas.”

He proceeds to notice the “inimitable grace” of the pictures of the dawn and the “*il tremolar della marina*” (*Purg.* i. 115–117), of the storm after the battle of Campaldino (*Purg.* v. 109–127), of the pinewood of Ravenna and the songs of birds (*Purg.* xxviii. 1–24), of the river of light (*Par.* xxx. 61–69). His suggestion on this last description is not, I think, found elsewhere:—

“It would almost seem as if this picture had its origin in the poet's recollection of that peculiar and rare phosphorescent condition of the ocean when luminous points appear to rise from the breaking waves, and, spreading themselves over the surface of the waters, convert the liquid plain into a moving sea of sparkling stars” (ii. p. 418).

In the year 1824, Scartazzini, as I have said above, recognises a new starting-point. The period of neglect or supercilious criticism comes to an end, and one of reverence, admiration, and exhaustive study begins. His account of the labours of German scholars during the sixty years that have followed fills the remainder of his volume. Translations of the *Commedia* by Kopisch, Kannegiesser, Witte, Philalethes (the *nom de plume* of John, King of Saxony), Josefa Von Hoffinger, of the Minor Poems by Witte and Krafft, endless volumes and articles on all points connected with Dante's life and character, the publications of the Deutsche Dante-Gesellschaft from 1867 to 1877, present a body of literature which has scarcely a parallel in history. It is no exaggeration to say that the Germans have taught Italians to understand and appreciate their own poet, just as they have at least helped to teach Englishmen to understand Shakespeare. Out of the vast range of matter thus presented I must content myself with selecting a few of the more salient points which touch upon the subject of this *Study*.

I. THE LABOURS OF KARL WITTE.—I doubt whether the history of men of letters presents a more complete instance of devotion to a single work than that of the Dantophilist whom I have just named. For more than sixty years he consecrated his life to the studies, the results of which, after appearing in countless journals and Transactions, have been collected by the author in his *Dante Forschungen*. Nothing has been too great or too small for him. He has collated the text of MSS., hunted out lost sonnets in the libraries of Italian cities, translated both the *Commedia* and the Minor Poems, has reviewed well-nigh every work on Dante that appeared for forty years, and has thrown himself with a profound insight and sympathy into the poet's mind and character. As the result of this labour of love, he has left, as his chief contribution to Dante literature, an essay on what he calls "Dante Misunderstood" (*Ueber das Missverständniss Dantes*). I have been largely indebted to that essay, and to other papers in which the same theory of the trilogy of Dante's life has been developed, in my own life of the poet and in my study on the *Genesis and Growth of the Commedia*, but it may be well to give its substance in a slightly abridged form in the writer's own words:—

"Already in the tender years of innocence Dante had opened his heart to love; but a love so pure and chaste and holy, that it would be hard to say whether it were roused by the child Beatrice, or whether the boy had given to her, as the visible symbol of his Creator, the fervent devotion with which he looked on his Father in Heaven. The *Vita Nuova* is the product of the filial love thus originated.

"But when the poet reached the age of manhood, and Beatrice was taken from him, he mourned long time for her, as men mourn for a lost innocence. Then at last, allured by new charms, he thinks that he has refound his first love in the glances of the *donna gentile*. In these new promises of consolation, however, his first affection is felt to be passing from his thoughts, and he is entirely occupied with the new consoler, which is Philosophy. Of this new love mingled with bitter grief we have the record in the *Amoroso Convito*, a love unquiet and full of pain, because for the peace of filial resignation there had come in desires more impetuous. These the graces of his new mistress could not satisfy.

"Thus is Alighieri led to speculate on all things that present themselves to his mind—on justice, valour, magnanimity, to defend and explain his views on the ordinances of civil polity, on the chief events of his time, to employ his life to realise in act what had come before his mind as true ideality. It is precisely at this time that he enters on

public life, and probably that he corrects and formulates his thoughts on language and poetry.

"But then the rage of parties threatens to draw him into the whirlpool of worldly cares and unbridled passions, and Philosophy to reveal to him that other aspect of her face which she turns away far from this lower world. And therefore, turning his back on earthly allurements, and on the scene of furious conflicts, he sets himself to climb the steepest paths of speculation, if so he might come to gaze upon the Sun of eternal truth, to know the very essence of the Deity. This he essays to do by natural reason, but soon he is conscious of his feebleness; he sees that he has taken a wrong path, that only Revelation could guide him to a happy issue. Having already in some measure strayed from the religion of Christ, the three virtues that are characteristic of it are lacking to him, and lower passions drag him forcibly into the darkness of our stormy life. He is fast bound by present things and their delights; he does not hope in the coming kingdom of God; he becomes the prey of an ill-regulated self-love. Instead of believing and submitting himself to Divine Revelation, his philosophic pride dazzles him, and he thinks that reason is sufficient to penetrate to the lowest abysses of the Infinite. Lastly, instead of love, there is hatred, which inflames him against his erring brothers, and makes him the slave of the spirit of faction, envy, and intolerance.

"And then, lo! the grace of God begins to rekindle in his breast the light of religion, and he repents of his abandonment to philosophic pride; his first faith and his first love for his Beatrice revive in him more glowing than ever, and on the very day on which the Divine Redeemer had wrought salvation for mankind, the poet is restored to freedom in his inmost being, save that his sin still weighs upon his conscience; nor can he, according to the Church's teaching, enter into the glory of Heaven except by feeling, in a broken and contrite heart, a profound grief for the impiety committed by him in departing from God; by cleansing himself, by due expiation, from the stains which had defiled the native divine purity of his soul—*contritio, satisfactio*."

It will be remembered that in all this Witte writes as a Lutheran, and has therefore no polemic motive, such as may, consciously or unconsciously, have influenced men like Ozanam, Hettinger, or Manning, leading him to vindicate Dante's Catholicity. Substantially we have seen he comes to the same conclusion as they do, but it is the distinguishing merit of his theory, considered as a working hypothesis, that it takes in all, or well-nigh all, the phenomena which the problem presents, instead of resting, as the writers I have named, and those of the opposite school, like Rossetti and Aroux, have done, in a partial and one-

sided induction. Its completeness has so far won, at least, the general assent of most of the great Dante experts both in Germany and other parts of Europe, notably of Scartazzini, the only writer whose lifelong devotion and all-devouring exhaustiveness place him on the same line as Witte.

2. THE TRANSLATION OF PHILALETHES.—The phenomenon of a version of such a poem as the *Commedia* by a sovereign ruler is, as far as I know, unique in literature. Here also there was the lifelong devotion without which success in such a work—such success as John, King of Saxony, has attained—is altogether impossible. Born in 1801, he succeeded his father, Maximilian, in 1854, and died in 1872. The translation was at first printed privately by instalments in 1828–40, and has since been republished (1865) in a collected form.

I quote from the preface to the second edition a few words that express the feeling of the translator for his author :—

“Dante,” he writes, “has for a long time been one of the writers whom I have most loved, and the very difficulties which he presented were for me a new attraction to consecrate myself to him with an ever-growing and more living affection. The special impress of a man in the highest degree standing apart from every other, in a time entirely different from every other, . . . a language which so far presented a hindrance to the poet’s genius, inasmuch as he had to be the first to create it, its high moral elevation and its infinite elaboration in execution, were always to me an irresistible attraction. The *Divina Commedia* has always presented to me the aspect of a Gothic cathedral, where the exaggerations of ornament may sometime offend our more refined taste, while the sublime and austere impression of the whole, and the exquisite finish and variety of details, fill our mind with wonder. The one no less than the other are living products of a period fertile in movement, of that Middle Age which we have now begun once more to hold in honour.”

3. WEGELE’S (F. X.) *LEBEN DANTE*.—As the version of Philalethes among translations, so is the work bearing this title among the biographies of Dante. In thoroughness, insight, freedom from triviality or unprofitable discussion of what has been said by others, it presents itself as a model of all that the life of a great poet ought to be.

I select a few samples of the thoughts which seem to me most pregnant with a suggestive light :—

"We recognise in this union" (of the real and the ideal in Dante's treatment of Beatrice) "one of the master-strokes of the *Divine Comedy*. We must not forget that it is no saint of the Church, no one with an authority that would prevail with an outsider, but only his own beloved one that the poet sought to glorify, and that in the region where he had actually experienced her power. The natural and artistic elements of this combination have, perhaps, best been grasped by Raphael, who, if I am not altogether mistaken, has beyond doubt had Dante's Beatrice in his thoughts in his well-known personification of Theology.

"The political and moral condition in which Dante would have maintained his country, or to which rather he would have brought her back, is to be recognised most clearly in the indications which are found in the several passages of the poem on the destinies and the state of Florence. He rejects altogether the democratic principle, and seeks its golden age in the first half of the twelfth century, when the power of the nobles was yet unbroken, and the *popolo* lived in happy obscurity, and a simple and pure morality ruled them. This view of Dante must seem to us all the more important because it brings before us, in a single instance, his judgment upon the whole civic development of Upper Italy. He clung to Florence with a love which nothing could destroy; here he had looked in closest proximity on the workings of the democratic spirit, had experienced them in his own person, and had become their victim. So we come at the outset on the decided aristocratic feudal character of the poet, which we have already ascribed to him" (p. 565).

"For the endeavour after the unity of his people Dante spoke the first and the decisive word, which can never now be stifled. It was the well-deserved expiation of the wrong done to the living patriot when the nation, nearing the completion of its unity, proclaimed to the listening world, with the wide-echoing trumpet-note of a national festival, the six-hundredth anniversary of the birthday of her greatest son" (p. 575).

Elsewhere he claims for Dante a foremost place among the restorers of Latin literature :—

"It is not too much to say that Dante was the first to give a true living reality to the name of Virgil. He has good ground for calling him his master, and for speaking of the long study and the great love which he has given to his poems. In like, though less intimate, relations he stands to Lucan and Statius, to Cicero and Horace, and especially to Ovid, whose *Metamorphoses*, together with the *Æneid*, furnish him with the richest supply of materials. . . . We do not, however, say that he shared unreservedly the one-sided passionate surrender to classical studies which characterised the fourteenth and fifteenth century of Italian history. Quite the reverse of this. He seems to have known

his nation so well that he had a forecast of that one-sidedness, and therefore strove with all the energy of which his nature was capable to establish a healthy equilibrium through the cultivation of a national literature, especially that of prose applied to the treatment of scientific subjects. His warning voice, however, was as that of one crying in the wilderness.

"The man from whom modern history takes its start, Machiavelli, learnt from none of his predecessors so much as from Dante. This is clear to any one familiar with his writings, and one scarcely needs to know that he, with the ancient classics, was his favourite author. The two men have, in spite of all differences in their natures, essential points of contact in their views and aims. Machiavelli, like Dante, rejects the republican principle, and presses forward to the political unity of Italy. If Dante strives to attain that end through the legitimate Roman *imperium*, it was that he lived in the thirteenth century of the Middle Ages, a through and through ideal nature. Machiavelli sighs, as a farsighted seer of the newer age, after a new prince, a revolutionary despot, who with fire and sword shall bring his people to their senses, and smiles at the cosmopolitanism of his forerunner" (p. 604).

"When Dante himself brands with infamy the degeneracy of his nation, we might hold his judgment as unjust from the very fact that it had given birth to a character so strong as his own. But of a truth he was for a long time the last of that type. How far below him stands Petrarch! Petrarch was a man of letters, his life the brilliant life of a man of letters, in which self-consciousness and self-seeking played a great part. Dante was a statesman and a scholar; his poetry is without any worldly aims, solely and entirely the fruit of his inner impulse and his spiritual development. Petrarch was a man of the understanding, cold-blooded in his very enthusiasm, and knew how to make compromises with everybody. Dante held fast to his convictions and would make no concession to circumstances. So it was that the one led a comfortable and brilliant life, and, at the end of his days, left the world probably with regret; the other died poor and in exile, but, without doubt, assured and restful in himself.

"It is not uncommon for the spirit of a dying age to rouse itself yet once more to maintain its falling supremacy. In this sense it was that Dante took the field. He could not stay the fall of the decaying Middle Age, but he has built for it a colossal monument, the like of which is found nowhere else on the border-land which commands the last view of a world-period coming to its close. In the *Divina Commedia* he has chanted the swan-song of the Middle Ages" (p. 612).

4. JOSEFA VON HOFFINGER.—I note this name chiefly on account of the verses which I have translated, and which seem to

me to give an estimate new in character, and from the standpoint of a clear-sighted and sympathising woman, of Dante's relations with his wife. The history of the writer of these lines is, however, remarkable enough to be worth telling.¹

Born in 1820 at Vienna, the daughter of a Government official (*Regierungsrath*), she developed in early life powers of an unusual order. In 1848 she was appointed as the second mistress of the highest institution for female education in that city. Failing health compelled her to retire in 1858. In 1866 she took an active part in nursing the sick and wounded during the great war between Austria and Prussia. The work overtasked her strength, and she died in the September of that year, after some months of suffering, heroically borne. From 1840 she had been a student of the *Commedia*, and the effect of that study, with her as with thousands of others, had been to deepen and ennoble her inner life. She studied theology under the guidance of men like Döllinger and Veith. Devotion to the poet took with her, as with so many, the form of a wish to reproduce him in her own language. She hesitated between her strong desire and the consciousness of her own want of power. At last, in October 1863, she began and completed her whole work—so rapid a performance of so great a task is, I think, without a parallel—in sixteen months. The poem of which I have spoken seems to me well worthy of being more widely known. It has the interest of being the one woman's view of Dante's home-life (Miss Maria Rossetti's *Shadow of Dante* excepted) that has come within the range of my reading, and as showing what a faithful and loving nature pictured to itself as a true representation of that life.

DANTE'S WIFE.

FROM A WOMAN'S POINT OF VIEW.

(From the German of Josefa Von Hoffinger.)

ON every tongue is Beatrice's name :
Of thee, much sorrowing one, no song doth tell ;
The pang of parting like a keen dart came,
And pierced thee with a wound invisible :
Art brings her incense only to the fair,
Virtue must wait her crown in Heaven to wear.

¹ I take my narrative from an obituary notice by V. A. Huber, whose *History of English Universities* is well known to most students, in the *D. Gesell.* ii. pp. 385-394.

E'en he, for whom thou didst thy burden bear,
 By not one word his love for thee revealed.
 His wailings o'er his country all might hear ;
 For thee those lips so eloquent were sealed ;
 And so on him and thee cold hearts cast blame,
 Not knowing silent grief brings worthiest fame.

The deepest wound still shrinks from slightest touch,
 It feeds upon itself in secret pain ;
 The breath of words but makes it more from much ;
 A beggar dumb the sufferer must remain :
 The keenest pang, which language fails to reach,
 Finds, in half-broken sobs, its only speech.

They know not, when each nerve with anguish thrills,
 How palsied sinks the artist's expert hand,
 And, where sharp sorrow all the spirit fills,
 The poet's lips no utterance may command :
 Life's bitterest moments find no voice in song ;
 Groans only tell of hearts oppress'd with wrong.

"From all thou lovest best thou soon must part ;"¹
 So ran the broken speech of his lament ;
 Far off that greeting came from grief-worn heart,
 To the true wife, his faithful helpmate, sent ;
 A farewell glance from eyes whence flowed no tears,
 Dry with vain longings through the lonely years.

"The pilgrim's grief, when sound the evening bells,
 The day that he has bid dear friends Good-bye ;"²
 Thus through the soul thrill memory's magic spells,
 The sorrow-stifled germ of melody ;
 A cry of anguish, melting into sighs,
 Tells of the throbbing heart's dull miseries.

Yes, thou brave woman, mother of his sons,
 'Twas thine to know the weight of daily care ;
 'Twas thine to understand those piteous tones,
 Thine much to suffer, all in silence bear ;
 How great thy grief, thy woes how manifold,
 God only knows—of them no song hath told.

5. HETTINGER, FRANZ. *Dante's Divina Commedia: its Scope and Value*. Edited by H. S. Bowden, 1886.—Short of a formal Vatican decree of canonisation, the volume which bears this title comes as near as may be, in itself and in its history, to an official recognition of Dante's catholicity and soundness in the faith. The *Advocatus Diaboli* has been heard in the person of Aroux, and Dr. Hettinger, Professor of Theology in the University of Wurzburg,

¹ *Par.* xvii. 55.

² *Purg.* viii. 1-6.

appears as counsel for the defence. It is translated into English by Father H. S. Bowden of the Oratory. It is commended by a circular letter from the Cardinal Archbishop of Westminster in words of glowing eloquence which I have already quoted.

As if to crown all these with the highest authority, we have, if not a Papal utterance *ex cathedra*, at least a formal public act on the part of the successor of St. Peter. "In 1857 Pius IX. himself placed a wreath on the tomb of Dante at Ravenna" (p. 346). Coupling these facts with the strong impulse given to the study of Aquinas by the present Pontiff, with his known personal devotion to the *Commedia*, with the early anticipation of a *Sancte Dantes, Ora pro nobis* in the elegy of De' Fantinelli (p. 413), with the language of Rosmini and Silvio Pellico, it seems to need only a slight extension of the doctrine of development for the Latin Church to take yet one step farther and formally to place the name of Dante on her list of saints. One feels almost tempted to compose a Latin collect for May 15, or a Commemoration, like that in honour of Bishop Ken, with which Cardinal Newman sought in his earlier years to enrich the Anglican Prayer-Book. Anyhow, it would seem a better experiment in hagiology than the canonisation of Mary Queen of Scots.

Dr. Hettinger's volume is an elaborate study of the *Commedia* from the standpoint of the *Summa Theologica*, illustrated by copious extracts from both. So far it follows in the steps of Ozanam. It is, perhaps, a more elaborate work than *Dante et la Philosophie Catholique*; it lacks, I think, something of the devout glow with which that volume is inspired.

Dr. Hettinger's work, exhaustive as it is, does not present many passages for quotation. I select a few by way of sample of his general estimate of Dante's character and genius:—

"Two works only, in ancient and modern times, can claim comparison with the *Divina Commedia*—Homer's *Iliad* and Goethe's *Faust*. The nearest in matter and form, though still its inferior, is *Faust*. It is the only German poem which unites, under the figure of Faust, man's present efforts and his final end. It is a comedy, but, as Schelling remarks, far more in the sense of Aristophanes, and divine in another and more poetic acceptation of the word. But granted that Goethe in genius and culture was Dante's equal, both as a poet and in other respects, yet he lacked the creative power necessary to develop his idea. His ideal world is purely allegorical, and his images of it, though

artistically drawn, are arbitrary and well-nigh unintelligible. Most poets clothe their ideas in allegorical forms, whose unreality is apparent throughout, and the illusion entirely fails. Dante's figures, on the contrary, have a real existence, independent of their allegorical significance, and they themselves, more than their antitypes, speak to our imagination. With him we tread upon sure ground, and are surrounded by realities. Goethe's world, displayed in *Faust*, may be richer in ideas, more varied in form, than that of Dante, but the problem of the Universe which he proposes to unriddle is never solved. Wreck and dissolution of body and soul alike are, with Faust, the only end of this life. Dante, on the other hand, sees one eternal purpose traced and developed in all things, and man, through the Redeemer, winning his way to God. Nor can the fragmentary form of *Faust* compare with the organised completeness of Dante's poem.

"Thus in Dante's hands the real Beatrice and her spirit idealised form one character. From their first meeting in childhood to that when she smiles upon him for the last time from the bosom of God, she is manifested in a gradual process of transfiguration and glorification. It is her form which gives dramatic interest and movement to the whole process of absolution, purification, illumination, and beatification. In her theology and poetry, speculation and phantasy, are wonderfully united."

7. J. A. SCARTAZZINI.—The name of this writer might seem to claim a place under the head of Italian rather than German Dante literature. He is, however, emphatically a man *utriusque lingue peritus*. On the one hand we have his Italian Commentary on the *Commedia*, beyond all question the most elaborate and exhaustive in any language, and the *Dante in Germania*, which has so largely contributed to the completeness of the present section of this essay. On the other, he has published his *Life of Dante* in German, was the editor of the last volume of the *Jahrbücher* of the German Dante Society, and contributed some of his most valuable papers to its third and fourth volumes.

I am, I need scarcely say, very largely indebted to him both as a commentator and a biographer. In each of these regions he brings together the results of an omnivorous range of reading. Nothing that has been written about Dante in German or Italian seems to have escaped him. He discusses conflicting theories of the man and of his works, of single passages or isolated phrases, and for the most part comes to a true and sensible conclusion. On the other hand, it must, I think, be admitted that he excels rather in thus analysing and balancing what has been said by

others than in embodying his own thoughts in forcible and pregnant words, and I do not find in him so many passages that present themselves for quotation as I do in Wegele. I select one or two of the most suggestive from the *Life of Dante* :—

“The *Vita Nuova* belongs to the list of those writings, in the highest degree interesting and attractive, which reveal, with childlike simplicity, the heart of the writer, his innermost thought and feeling. It is an autobiography *sui generis*. As a whole, literature, in the widest sense, possesses only one book which may be compared with Dante’s *primitia* as an author : the *Confessions of Augustine*. In the one, as in the other, there is the same intensity of feeling, the same prominence of subjective individuality, the same depth of consciousness” (pp. 302–303).

“Dante’s poem has experienced nearly the same fate as the writings of the authors of the Bible. Every age which occupies itself with them, seeks to find in it its own views, every interpreter his own thoughts. Especially in the poet’s own country, which, as lay in the nature of the case, occupied itself more thoroughly and diligently with the father of its culture and its literature, every tendency and every party has striven with all imaginable energy to make the great poet one of themselves. To the ultramontanes Dante must be an ultramontane ; to the demagogues, a demagogue ; to the lovers of innovation, an innovator ; to the free-thinkers, a free-thinker ; to political parties, a partisan ; to believers, a believer ; to infidels, an infidel. With such prepossessions men have approached the *Divina Commedia*, and what wonder then that it has been liable to all possible interpretations ; that men’s views as to its fundamental ideas have been wide as the poles asunder ?” (p. 474).

VII.

AMERICA.

Mr. Longfellow’s translation of the *Commedia* is the most conspicuous proof that our Transatlantic brethren are not behind others in their reverence for the great Florentine. It is far, however, from standing alone, and it does not occupy the foremost position in order of time. So far as I know, the earliest translation of the *Vita Nuova* into English, *The Early Life of Dante Alighieri*, was by an American, Mr. J. Garrow, published at Florence in 1846. Another version was printed at Boston by Mr. C. E. Norton, Sir Theodore Martin and Mr. D. G. Rossetti having

in the meantime published their versions in 1862 and 1866 respectively. To Mr. Norton we also owe a fairly full essay on the portraits of Dante. An examination of Mr. Longfellow's version does not fall within the scope of the present study, and neither in his notes nor in his diary and correspondence is there anything of the nature of an estimate which presents itself for quotation. One wishes sometimes, as one goes through the rich collection of materials of this nature which he has gathered from others, and of which I have largely availed myself, that he had told us what he himself thought of the genius and character of the man to whom he devoted so many years of loving labour. As some compensation for the absence of that which is thus lacking, he has given us in the sonnets prefixed to the three parts of the *Commedia* a worthy tribute from the foremost poet of the New World to the greatest poet-prophet—the noblest *vates sacer*—of the Old, and these I lay before the reader.

I. HELL.

Oft have I seen at some cathedral door
 A labourer, pausing in the dust and heat,
 Lay down his burden, and with reverent feet
 Enter and cross himself, and on the floor
 Kneel to repeat his *paternoster* o'er.
 Far off the noises of the world retreat ;
 The loud vociferations of the street
 Become an undistinguishable roar.
 So, as I enter here from day to day,
 And leave my burden at this minster gate,
 Kneeling in prayer, and not ashamed to pray,
 The tumult of the time disconsolate
 To inarticulate murmurs dies away,
 While the eternal ages watch and wait.

II. PURGATORY.

I enter, and I see thee in the gloom
 Of the long aisles, O poet saturnine !
 And strive to make my steps keep pace with thine.
 The air is filled with some unknown perfume ;
 The congregation of the dead make room
 For thee to pass ; the votive tapers shine ;
 Like rooks that haunt Ravenna's groves of pine,
 The hovering echoes fly from tomb to tomb.
 From the confessionals I hear arise
 Rehearsals of forgotten tragedies,
 And lamentations from the crypts below ;

And then a voice celestial, that begins
 With the pathetic words "Although your sins
 As scarlet be," and ends with "as the snow."

III. PARADISE.

I lift mine eyes, and all the windows blaze
 With forms of Saints, and holy men who died,
 Here martyred and hereafter glorified ;
 And the great Rose upon its leaves displays
 Christ's triumph, and the angelic roundelays,
 With splendour upon splendour multiplied ;
 And Beatrice again at Dante's side
 No more rebukes, but smiles her words of praise.
 And then the organ sounds, and unseen choirs
 Sing the old Latin hymns of peace and love,
 And benedictions of the Holy Ghost ;
 And the melodious bells among the spires
 O'er all the housetops and through heaven above
 Proclaim the elevation of the Host !

The defect which I have noted in Longfellow is, however, more than balanced by the *Essay on Dante* which Mr. J. R. Lowell¹ has published in vol. i. of *Among my Books*. Of that essay, take it all in all, it seems no exaggeration to say that it is simply the most complete presentation of what Dante wrote, of what the man himself was, that exists in any literature. More subtly penetrating, more reverential in its attitude and tone, more loving and complete in its knowledge of the whole poem, from the first line of the *Inferno* to the last of the *Paradiso*, than Dean Church's essay it could scarcely be, and it can never supersede it. The later writer has, however, the advantage of reaping where the earlier had sown, and he gathers into his barn the rich harvest of those labourers who were before him in the field. There is, accordingly, a wider range of knowledge and illustration, a more critical survey of what has been done for Dante by others, a fuller discussion of the vexed questions that gather round the poet's life and character. I refer the reader to that essay as completing whatever I may have left

¹ Mr. Lowell and Mr. Norton, it may be mentioned, were members of the Dante Club which formed a kind of consultative committee during the progress of Mr. Longfellow's translation. It has since expanded into a Dante Society at Cambridge, Mass., U.S.A., and publishes its annual transactions with as yet unabated vitality. The only society of the kind with which I am acquainted in England consists of members of the University of Oxford, the present Principal of St. Edmund's Hall, now Barlow Lecturer on Dante in the University of London ; but they, unluckily, have not published the result of their labours except in the form of occasional reports in the *Academy*.

incomplete, and telling the tale which I have told—(I am thankful that for the most part I find myself in agreement with him)—with a force and vividness to which I am conscious that I can lay no claim. I have chosen the closing paragraph of Mr. Lowell's essay as one of the mottos of these volumes. I gather, as a worthy ending for this present study, some half-dozen of its more striking passages:—

"Looked at outwardly, the life of Dante seems to have been an utter and disastrous failure. What its inward satisfactions must have been, we, with the *Paradiso* open before us, can form some faint conception. To him, longing, with an intensity which only the word *Dantesque* will express, to realise an ideal upon earth, and continually baffled and misunderstood, the far greater part of his mature life must have been labour and sorrow. We can see how essential all that sad experience was to him, we understand why all the fairy stories hide the luck in the ugly black basket; but to him, then and there, how seemed it?

'Thou shalt relinquish everything of thee
Beloved most dearly; this that arrow is
Shot from the bow of exile first of all;
And thou shalt prove how salt a savour hath
The bread of others, and how hard a path
To climb and to descend the stranger's stairs.'

"*Come sa di sale!* Who never wet his bread with tears, says Goethe, knows ye not, ye heavenly powers!" (p. 19).

"The *Vita Nuova* traces with exquisite unconsciousness the gradual but certain steps by which memory and imagination transubstantiated the woman of flesh and blood into a holy ideal, combining in one radiant symbol of sorrow and hope that faith which is the instinctive refuge of unavailing regret, that grace of God which higher natures learn to find in the trial which passeth all understanding, and that perfect womanhood, the dream of youth and the memory of maturity which beckons towards the for-ever unattainable. As a contribution towards the physiology of genius, no other book is to be compared with the *Vita Nuova*. It is more important to the understanding of Dante as a poet than any other of his works. It shows him (and that in the midst of affairs demanding practical ability and presence of mind) capable of a depth of contemplative abstraction equalling that of a Soofi who has passed the fourth step of initiation. It enables us, in some sense, to see how, from being the slave of his imaginative faculty, he rose by self-culture and force of will to that mastery of it which is art" (p. 26).

"Dante is assumed by many to have been a Platonist, but this is not true in the strict sense of the word. Like all men of great imagination,

he was an idealist, and so far a Platonist as Shakespeare might be proved to have been from his sonnets. But Dante's direct acquaintance with Plato may be reckoned at zero, and we consider it as having strongly influenced his artistic development for the better, that, transcendentalist as he was by nature, so much so as to be in danger of lapsing into an Oriental mysticism, his habits of thought should have been made precise and his genius disciplined by a mind so severely logical as that of Aristotle" (p. 33).

"The whole nature of Dante was one of intense belief. There is proof upon proof that he believed himself invested with a divine mission. Like the Hebrew prophets, with whose writings his whole soul was imbued, it was back to the old worship and the God of the fathers that he called the people" (p. 36).

"As a merely literary figure, the position of Dante is remarkable. Not only as respects thoughts, but as respects æsthetics also, his great poem stands as a monument between the ancient and modern. He not only marks, but is in himself, the transition. *Arma virumque cano*, that is the motto of classic song; the things of this world and great men. Dante says, *subjectum est homo*, not *vir*; my theme is *man*, not a man. The scene of the old epic and drama was in this world, and its catastrophe here. Dante lays his scene in the human soul and his fifth act in the other world. He makes himself the protagonist of his own drama. In the *Commedia* for the first time Christianity wholly revolutionises Art, and becomes its seminal principle. But æsthetically also, as well as morally, Dante stands between the old and the new, and reconciles them. The theme of his poem is purely subjective, modern, what is called romantic; but its treatment is objective (almost to realism, here and there) and it is limited by a form of classical severity. In the same way he sums up in himself the two schools of modern poetry which had preceded him, and while essentially lyrical in his subject, is epical in his treatment of it. So also he combines the deeper and more abstract religious sentiment of the Teutonic race with the scientific and absolute systematism of the Romanic. In one respect Dante stands alone. While we can in some sort account for such representative men as Voltaire and Goethe (nay, even Shakespeare), by the intellectual and moral fermentation of their time, Dante seems morally isolated, and to have drawn his inspiration wholly from his own internal resources" (p. 37).

"Milton's angels are not to be compared with Dante's, at once real and supernatural; and the Deity of Milton is a Calvinistic Zeus, while nothing in all poetry approaches the imaginative grandeur of Dante's vision of God at the conclusion of the *Paradise*. In all literary history

there is no such figure as Dante, no such homogeneousness of life and work, such loyalty to ideas, such sublime irrecognition of the unessential ; and there is no moral more touching than that the contemporary recognition of such a nature should be summed up in the sentence of Florence : *Igne comburatur sic quod moriatur* " (p. 38).

"As the Gothic cathedral, then, is the type of the Christian idea, so is it also of Dante's poem. And as that, in its artistic unity, is but the completed thought of a single architect, which yet could never have been realised except out of the faith and by the contributions of an entire people, whose beliefs and superstition, whose imagination and fancy, find expression in its statues and its carvings, its calm saints and martyrs, now at rest for ever in the seclusion of their canopied niches, and its wanton grotesques thrusting themselves forth from every pinnacle and gargyle, so in Dante's poem, while it is as personal and peculiar as if it were his private journal and autobiography, we can yet read the diary and autobiography of the thirteenth century and of the Italian people. Complete and harmonious in design as his work is, it is yet no Pagan temple enshrining a type of the human made divine by triumph of corporeal beauty ; it is not a private chapel housing a single saint and dedicate to one chosen bloom of Christian piety or devotion ; it is truly a cathedral, over whose high altar hangs the emblem of suffering, of the Divine made human to teach the beauty of adversity, the eternal presence of the spiritual, not overhanging and threatening, but informing and sustaining, the material. In this cathedral of Dante's there are side-chapels, as is fit, with altars to all Christian virtues and perfections ; but the great impression of its leading thought is that of aspiration for ever and ever. In the three divisions of the poem we may trace something more than a fancied analogy with a Christian basilica. There is first the ethnic fore-court, then the purgatorial middle-space, and last, the holy of holies, dedicated to the eternal presence of the mediatorial God " (p. 101).

With this extract, the most perfect development, as it seems to me, of an idea which had become, in its elementary form, almost the commonplace of commentators, I close this *catena* of estimates. I am conscious of its incompleteness. Within the regions which I have attempted to survey there are in each some scores of men and women whose thoughts have been stirred by Dante, who have formed their own estimate of him, and found utterance for it in prose or verse. Beyond those regions, in every country into which the *Commedia* has been translated, Dutch, Spanish, Swedish, Russian, Hungarian, he has doubtless made his impressions, been the object of like judgments. Whether they would add new ele-

ments to the induction, or illustrate only the uniformity of the laws of human nature operating on the same object through the manifold diversities of character, I cannot say. The impression left by the induction, such as it is, is, I suppose, that the last word has not yet been spoken, that the subject is, in fact, inexhaustible. In part, of course, this is true of every man's life, of the mystery of every man's character. As some one has said, *Satis alter alteri magnum theatrum sumus*. There is, in the strictest sense of the word, a drama, tragic or comic, or with both elements intermingled in ever-varying proportions, in every one of us, beneath the conventionalities and uniformities of our everyday existence. But in proportion as any man rises above his fellows in gifts of intellect or character, in proportion as his spirit is solitary and king-like, and "his soul is as a star and dwells apart," the mystery and the enigma of his life become more unfathomable. Sophocles, Shakespeare, Milton, Cromwell, Goethe, among the great heroes of the past; Byron, Wordsworth, Tennyson, Browning, John Henry Newman, and Frederick Maurice, in times nearer to our own—of these we feel that for generations to come men will write of them, as they have written of Dante, each from his own standpoint; each trying to gauge the unfathomable with his own plumb-line, with varying measures of success. One thing will, at least, be clear as the result of the induction: that in attempting such a measurement, men, consciously or unconsciously, reveal their own character, their sympathy with a nobility greater than their own, or their antipathy to that which stands in contrast with their own frivolity, or pedantry, or incapacity. It is true of Dante, as it has been true of every utterer of a prophetic word, of every wearer of the prophet's mantle, that he has been as "a sign that shall be spoken against," as one "set for the fall or rising again" of many in the wider Israel of mankind, that "the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed." As we read the superficial criticism of the valets on the hero in his own age or in the ages that have followed, we are tempted to say, "*Procul, O procul este profani!* Draw back from the inner sanctuary, which is to be trodden only by those who put their shoes from off their feet, because they feel that the place on which they tread is holy ground." As we read the judgments of the nobler spirits, who could see more clearly because their eyes were cleansed from the films of egotism and baseness, we feel that the

secret of their right judgment is found in the wider range of their sympathy. They have learnt to count nothing human alien from themselves, and they can therefore penetrate farther than their fellows into the heights and depths of humanity in its most exalted impersonations. Here also they feel that *omnia exeunt in mysterium*; but their knowledge of that mystery widens as the years pass on, and though they may not have solved the riddle of a single human character, not to speak of one so many-sided and myriad-minded as Dante's, they accept their partial glimpses as the pledge and earnest of a more perfect knowledge.

STUDY III.

DANTE AS AN OBSERVER AND TRAVELLER.¹

I

It is not my purpose in this paper to enter upon the general subject of the life of the great Florentine, or to discuss the plan and purpose of his great poem. I shall say nothing of his passion for Beatrice, or of the part which he took in Italian politics, or the relation in which he stood to the Catholic theology of his time. Of these I have spoken with sufficient fulness elsewhere. What I aim at now is to answer the question whether we find in him the seeing eye and the hearing ear which are the conditions of all true excellence in poetry, whether he knew how to observe, and how to describe what he saw as he had actually seen it, not in the trite phrases of what has been falsely called poetic diction, conventional and traditional ornaments of style, but in words which said what he meant them to say, and did the work of bringing before the mental eyes of others the scene on which his own eyes had looked. That will help, if I mistake not, to enlarge the circle of those who know him, love him, and are grateful to him. They will learn that there is something in the great poet for readers who know nothing of the politics of Florence, or of the subtleties of the schoolmen, to whom the words *Neri* and *Bianchi*, Guelphs and Ghibellines, are but of little meaning. Here also it may be true of Dante,—I shall be thankful if I can help to make it true,—as of all great masters of the poet's gifts, that the "common people will hear him gladly."

I shall take as my first example a picture that farmer and field-labourer will be able to enter into. It is an Italian scene in February, and the hoar frost lies on the ground almost like snow :

¹ Reprinted from the *Scottish Churchman* of December 1886 and January 1887, and delivered as a Lecture at Street, Somerset, in September 1886.

"In that frost season of the youthful year
 When the sun's locks the chill Aquarius slakes,
 And now the nights to half the day draw near,
 When on the ground the hoar-frost semblance makes
 Of the fair image of her sister white,
 But soon her brush its colour true forsakes,
 The peasant churl, whose store is emptied quite,
 Rises and looks around, and sees the plains
 All whitened, and for grief his hip doth smite,
 Turns to his house, and up and down complains,
 Like the poor wretch who knows not what to do ;
 Then back he turns and all his hope regains,
 Seeing the world present an altered hue,
 In little time, and takes his shepherd's crook,
 And drives his lambs to roam through pastures new."

—*Hell*, xxiv. 1-15.

We see there the poet who can describe, not Nature only, but man as affected by the changes of Nature, the disappointment of the shepherd, when, at early dawn, he sees no chance of pasture for his yearling lambs, for whom he has no store of fodder. He gives vent to his impatience after the manner of his class, and then the sun breaks through the wintry sky, and the fields are green once more, and his sheep can go forth upon the upland slopes.

There is a morning picture, such as Dante may have seen in the valleys of the Apennines. Here is a companion picture of an evening with entirely different surroundings. The scene is an Italian seaport; and the feeling described is that of the travellers who are leaving their home for some more or less distant country :

"The hour was come which brings back yearning new
 To those far out at sea, and melts their hearts,
 The day that they have bid sweet friends adieu ;
 Whereat the pilgrim fresh with strong love starts,
 If he, perchance, hears bells, far off yet clear,
 Which seem to mourn the day's life that departs."

—*Purg.* viii. 1-6.

Or take some other pictures of the glory of the dawn, apart from any special human feeling. The pilgrim emerges from the dark valley of the shadow of death, from the gloom of Hell to the clear air and sky on an Easter morning :

"The orient sapphire's hue of sweetest tone,
 Which gathered in the aspect, calm and bright,
 Of that pure air, as far as Heaven's first zone,

Now to mine eyes brought back the old delight,
 Soon as I passed forth from the dead, dank air,
 Which eyes and heart had veiled with saddest night.
 The planet whence love floweth,¹ sweet and fair,
 Clothed all the orient with a smiling grace."—*Purg.* i. 13-20.

He climbs the lower slopes of the Mountain of Cleansing which rise from the ocean-waters,—so he thought of Purgatory,—and looks around him :

"Near was the dawn its triumph bright to gain
 O'er morning's mist that vanished, so that I
 Knew from afar the trembling of the main."
 —*Purg.* i. 115-117.

The day advances further on its course :

"So that Aurora's beauteous cheeks disclose,
 From where I stand, the white and crimson sheen,
 Now passing with the hours to orange glows."
 —*Purg.* ii. 7-9.

Or we pass from this to an evening scene, when the glow-worms are seen, not as with us, lying on hedge-row banks, but flitting to and fro, as they do in Italy, like fire-flies through the air. The pilgrim is in one of the circles of Hell, and he sees the souls of the damned thus gleaming in the darkness :

"As when the peasant on the hill doth lie,—
 What time his face from us is least concealed,
 Who to the world gives light from out the sky,
 And swarms of flies to gnats their places yield,—
 And down the vale sees many a glow-worm's rays,
 There where he plucks his grapes or ploughs his field."
 —*Hdl.* xxvi. 25-30.

Or take this more elaborate description of a forest scene in Italy which Dante brings before us, as what met his gaze when, after passing upwards through the seven terraces of the Mount of Cleansing, he found himself on the borders of that Earthly Paradise, of which, in the fourteenth century, men dreamt as still existing in the distant South, or East, or West, if only men could sail far enough over the wide unexplored ocean, or scale the mountains that guarded the remoter East :

"Eager, within it, and around, each way
 To search that heavenly forest dense and green,
 That tempered to mine eyes the new-born day,

¹ The planet Venus as the morning star.

Waiting no more where I till then had been
 Upon the bank, I went on slowly, slow,
 O'er ground which fragrance breathed through all the scene;
 And a sweet breeze towards me then did blow
 With calm unvarying course upon my face,
 Not with more force than gentlest wind doth show.
 Thereat the leaves, set trembling all apace,
 Bent themselves, one and all, towards the side
 Where its first shade the Holy Hill doth trace;
 Yet from the upright swerved they not aside
 So far that any birds upon the spray
 Ceased by their wonted task-work to abide;
 But, with full heart of joy, the breeze of day
 They welcomed now within their leafy bower,
 Which to their songs made music deep to play,
 Like that which through the pine-wood runs each hour,
 From branch to branch upon Chiassi's shore,
 When Æolus lets loose Sirocco's power.
 Already had my slow steps led me o'er
 Such space within the ancient wood, that I,
 Where I had entered, now discerned no more;
 And lo! to bar my progress, I descry
 A river on the left, whose rippling stream
 Bent down the grass that to its banks grew nigh.
 All waters here on earth men clearest deem
 Would seem to have some turbid taint untrue,
 Compared with that which nought to hide doth seem,
 E'en though it flows on, brown and brown in hue,
 Beneath the eternal shade where never sun
 Nor moon the darkness with their rays break through."

—*Purg.* xxviii. 1-33.

All this, it will be admitted, forms a picture of surpassing beauty. But the landscape needed for its completeness, as well nigh all landscapes do, a human element, and it will be felt that the form which now appears on the scene is one well worthy of the pencil of a great artist. She is, I may note in passing, the Matilda of Dante's Purgatory, the early friend, too early lost, of his beloved Beatrice, of whom he thinks as the representative of the life of active cheerfulness, as Beatrice herself is of that of contemplative wisdom.¹ And this is how he paints her:

"My feet then halted, but mine eyes passed on
 Beyond that little stream, that I might gaze
 On the fresh varied May-blooms one by one;

¹ See Note on *Purg.* xxviii. 40, *Ball.* 2.

And then I saw—as one sees with amaze—
 A sight so sudden in bewilderment
 That every other thought the shock doth daze—
 A lady all alone, who, as she went,
 Sang evermore, and gathered flower on flower,
 With whose bright hues her path was all besprent."

—*Purg.* xxviii. 34-42.

I pass over the dialogue between the lady and the pilgrim which follows, as not belonging to the word-painting on which I now seek to dwell, but one finishing touch comes to give a fuller pictorial, I might almost say, dramatic, completeness :

"Then, as fair lady moving in the dance,
 Turns with her soles just lifted from the ground,
 And scarcely one foot forward doth advance,
 She among red and golden flowers turned round
 To me, and with no other look she went
 Than downcast eyes of maid with meekness crowned.
 And now she gave my prayers their full content,
 So drawing near me, that her song's sweet tone
 Came to me, and I gathered what it meant.
 Soon as she came where o'er the bank had grown
 Plants with the waves of that fair river wet,
 By special boon her eyes were on me thrown."

—*Purg.* xxviii. 52-63.

Most readers will, I think, agree with me that a more perfect picture is hardly to be found in the whole range of poetry. It paints, of course, an ideal scene, a beauty of wood and water such as Dante's eyes had never looked on, a human loveliness which was beyond what he had known and loved on earth. But none the less is it true that the ideal scene is developed out of the recollections of the past. Here, as elsewhere, the Muses are the daughters of Memory, and they bring forth from the rich storehouse in which they have gathered the impressions they have received through sight or hearing, the "things new and old" which the occasion may require. The poet himself, in this instance, tells us that the earlier touches of the picture grew out of what he had seen and heard in the pine-woods of Ravenna. I can scarcely doubt that the dark forest, and the brown flowing stream—brown with a clearness like that of a cairngorm crystal—were a reminiscence of the Etrurian shades of Vallombrosa, that even the fair lady gathering flowers had a human original, whom he had seen in

the springtide of his own life and hers, gathering the springtide flowers in the brightness of a rejoicing youth.

Yet one other landscape comes to my remembrance before I pass on to another region of my subject. The shadows of evening are falling as Dante and his guides, Virgil and Sordello, are climbing the Mount of Purgatory. It is proposed that before the daylight fades they should find a resting-place in a kind of happy valley, where the souls of kings and other great ones of the earth are waiting for the beginning of their discipline :

“Twixt hill and plain a winding path did trend,
Which led within the bosom of the vale
To where the ledge doth more than half descend.
Gold, silver, crimson, ceruse’ splendour pale,
The Indian wood so lucent and serene,
Fresh emerald, when its outer coat doth scale,
Placed in that vale the plants and flowers between,
Would each and all be found surpassed in hue,
As less by greater overpowered is seen ;
Nor did we Nature’s painting only view,
But of a thousand fragrant odours sweet
She made a mingled perfume strange and new.”

—*Purg.* vii. 70–81.

Here, again, we have a description in which we trace much more than the conventional language of the average poet. I agree with Mr. Ruskin in thinking that the list of colours it gives is precisely that of those which might be found in the paint-box of an artist whose chief work it was to illuminate MSS. with the angels, roses, violets, lilies, strawberries, which attract us as we look over the missals or the anthem-books of the thirteenth or fourteenth century. With those colours, Dante’s own work as a painter of angels must have made him familiar. It is probable even that his business as a member of the Guild of Apothecaries at Florence extended, as was common at the time, to the sale of artists’ pigments, as well as drugs. In that mingling of many odours I am disposed to trace not only the memory of the fragrance of meadow-sweet, or rose, or thyme, borne upon the breeze of spring, but, perhaps, also that blending of many odours which belongs to the laboratory of the chemist, who does by his art what Nature is represented here as working by a more subtle spell, and thus, in his turn, “makes a mingled perfume strange and new.”

It is time that I should turn to another region of the natural

world, in which we note in Dante not only the vivid presentation of beauty of form and character, but a keen insight into all the manifold aspects of the life of animals. I will start with a series of descriptions which connect themselves with the art of falconry as practised in the fourteenth century. That form of sport is now so obsolete that we find it difficult to understand the charm which it once had for men of all classes and conditions. The secret of that charm was, I take it, that it implied the skill of taming and training the living creatures which seemed least tractable, till they were amenable to man's discipline, and were subject to his will. The falcon became the friend and companion of his master almost as much as the pointer or the retriever. And so it took its place among the favoured sports of knights and nobles, and the Emperor Frederick II. did not think it beneath his dignity to write an elaborate treatise on the art of falconry, and to give rules for the management of the birds themselves. The passages which I am about to quote show that Dante wrote of it as an expert.

Here is a picture of the bird who fails to find his prey, and returns to his perch :

“ And as the falcon after lengthened flight,
 Who seeing neither bird, nor lure, finds blame,
 And makes his master cry, ‘ What ! dost alight ! ’
 Whence quick he started, wheels his weary frame
 A hundred times, and settles far apart
 From where his master stands, in sullen shame.”

—*Hell*, xvii. 127-132.

Or, again, when the hawk chases the wild duck :

“ Not otherwise than this the duck doth make
 Her sudden plunge, when nears the falcon's flight,
 And he flies up, much vexed, with wings that ache.”

—*Hell*, xxii. 130-132.

Or, once again, the poet's mind reverting ever and anon to the favourite sport of his early manhood :

“ Like falcon that its glance below doth fling,
 Then turns him to the call, and forward darts,
 Through strong desire for food, with eager wing,
 So acted I.”—*Purg.* xix. 64-67.

Or, yet once more :

“ As falcon from his hood just issuing out,
 Moving his head and fluttering either wing,
 In eager will and beauty flits about.”—*Par.* xix. 34-36.

That group is, I think, sufficiently suggestive. The poet shows that he possesses the power of the keen observer, who notes the element of character in the life of animals as well as their more outward phenomena. Or take the two comparisons with which he illustrates the condition of the sinners who are tormented in their gulf of seething pitch. They are :

“ As dolphins, when they signal give at sea
To sailors, with their backs all arched amain,
So that they plan how best the storm to flee.

And, as along a ditch's watery ways
Are seen the frogs with muzzles all thrust out,
So that their feet and bulk are hid from gaze ;
So stood the sinners everywhere about.”—*Hell*, xxii. 19-27.

Or take a picture of the flight of birds. He sees the souls who have yielded to sensual passions, driven to and fro by the wind :

“ And as the starlings through the wintry sky
Float on their wings in squadron long and dense,
So doth that storm the sinful souls sweep by.

And as the cranes fly chanting out their lays
And in the air form into lengthened line,
So those I looked on wailing went their ways.”

—*Hell*, v. 40-48.

Or later on in the same Canto, as though the flight of birds had an irresistible fascination for him :

“ And e'en as doves, when love its call has given,
With open steady wings to their sweet nest
Fly, by their will borne onward through the heaven.”

—*Hell*, v. 82-84.

Cranes attract him once more later on :

“ And then as cranes which this and that way flee,
Or to Rhipæan hills, or parchèd sand,
From frost these, sun those, seeking to be free.”

—*Purg.* xxvi. 43-45.

And the eye which thus watched the movements of birds was quick to notice also those of insects. He sees the souls in the last circle of Purgatory greeting each other as with a kiss of peace :

“ So oft, within their dusk-brown host, proceed
This ant and that, till muzzle muzzle meet ;
Spying their way, or how affairs succeed.”

—*Purg.* xxvi. 34-36.

The picture reminds one almost of Sir John Lubbock's ant studies, or the remarkable passage describing ant-life in Bishop Ken's *Hymnotheo*.¹ In some instances that keen eye of his saw analogies which almost startle us in their defiance of conventionality, from which an average poet would have shrunk, but which he ventures on with an almost sublime audacity. He wishes to indicate how the souls of the blessed clothe themselves with their garment of light, and he finds his similitude in the silk-worm. The soul speaks to the pilgrim :

"Thy great joy hides me from thee, and doth pour
Its radiance round about me, and conceals,
Like creature whom its own silk covers o'er."

—*Par.* viii. 52-54.

He sees the soul of Adam in Paradise, and the great father of the human race testifies his joy in seeing him by a tremulous motion, visible through that garment of light, and this also suggests a comparison drawn from the animal world :

¹ Ken's poems are so little known, that it is, I think, worth while quoting part of the passage to which I have referred :—

"They never idle, no one hour misspend,
But gladly on their daily tasks attend ;
See how they come and go in straightest lines,
As they begin or perfect their designs ;
In multitudes they march, yet order just,
No adverse files each other stop or thrust.

.
Before the sickle reaps the loaded ears,
The six-legg'd nation in the field appears ;
Of wheat sagaciously they choose the prime,
And up the stalk the sprightly insects climb ;
They nip the grain, while they who watch below,
With the fall'n cargoes to their caverns go ;
They gauge the seeds, and to their different weights
Proportion the just number of their mates ;
The various loads they carry or protrude,
Till in their barn the harvest they include.

.
When sudden showers surprise them by the way,
At the approach of a warm, sunny day,
Lest it should must, they bring it out again,
In the meridian sun to dry the grain ;
Beyond their annual food, foreseeing dearth,
Biennial stores they treasure under earth.

.
Along the middle runs a street direct,
Which ways transverse and equal intersect ;
Within whose walks the busy people meet,
Of their affairs there amicably treat."

The last two lines, it will be noticed, are almost a paraphrase of Dante's picture.

"As oft we see some creature struggling still,
 All covered up, and every motion shows
 How much he strives his longing to fulfil,
 So did that soul primeval then disclose,
 So that it shone through all its covering bright,
 What joy to meet my wish within it rose."

—*Par.* xxvi. 97-102.

What animal the poet has in view we are left to guess. To me it seems that our choice is limited to two, a dog or a cat, and I own that I incline to the latter. Few animals possess in equal measure the power of testifying their joy, as it does by the sound of its purring and the undulating motion of its body which accompanies it, visible even when it is covered over with a soft silk coverlet. It falls in with this view that Dante is said to have had a pet cat which he trained up to the point of standing on its hind-legs and holding a lighted candle.

The various aspects of the shepherd's life, as he had seen it on the slopes of the Apennines, naturally supplied the poet with not a few pictures :

"As tender ewes from out the sheep-fold stray,
 By ones, twos, threes, and others timid stand,
 While on the ground their eyes and noses play,
 And what the foremost doth, that doth the band,
 Around her pressing, if to halt she chance,
 Quiet, though why they do not understand."

—*Purg.* iii. 79.

A passage in one of Dante's prose works presents a striking parallel, and shows how the fact described impressed itself on the mind of the observer :

"If a sheep were to leap over a precipice more than a thousand feet high, all the rest would follow ; and if one jumps in crossing a path, all the others jump also, however little occasion there may be for such an act. I myself once saw many leap into a well, because one leapt into it, mistaking it, perhaps, for a low wall, though the shepherd, with cries, and tears, and outstretched arms, tried to stop them."—*Conv.* i. 11.

Another picture comes from *Purg.* xxvii. 76-90. Dante and his two companions, Virgil and Statius, have nearly reached the summit of the Mountain of Purgatory. Night falls, and they take shelter in the cleft of a rock :

"As are the goats that on the mountain heights,
 Ere they are fed, full wild and wanton bound,
 Then tame and still, to chew the cud delight,
 Hushed in the shade, while all is glare around,
 Watched by the shepherd, who upon his rod
 Leans, and, so leaning, keeps them safe and sound.
 And, as the goatherd, outside his abode,
 Doth by his slumbering flock his nightwatch keep,
 Guarding lest beast of prey should make inroad,
 So were we three then seen in silence deep,
 I as the goat, and e'en as goatherd they,
 On either side hemmed in by craggy steep.
 Little we saw of what beyond us lay,
 But through that little I beheld each star,
 Larger than is their wont, with brighter ray."

Dogs, in like manner, supply him with many similitudes. The souls in one of the pits of Hell seek to defend themselves against the smoke and burning sands of their torment :

"Not otherwise in summer dogs are seen,
 Moving or head or foot, when they by bite
 Of fleas, or flies, or gadflies vexed have been."

—*Hell*, xvii. 49-51.

Virgil, as in *Æn.* vi. 417-420, throws a sop to Cerberus :

"And as a dog who, craving food, doth stand
 Barking, grows quiet while his food he gnaws,
 And feels and fights at hunger's fierce command."

—*Hell*, vi. 28-30.

A demon pursues one of his victims :

"He flung him down, and on the hard rock bare
 He turned, and never mastiff unleashed sped
 With steps so swift the hunted thief to tear."

—*Hell*, xxi. 43-45.

And again :

"Then with the furious rage and madness sheer,
 With which upon a beggar dogs rush on,
 Who, on a sudden, halts and asks alms there."

—*Hell*, xxi. 67-69.

Even in the three symbolic beasts, which meet the pilgrim as he scales the Delectable Mountain, we find a vividness of portraiture which implies that Dante had seen their living prototypes :

"And lo ! just as the sloping side I gain,
 A leopard supple, lithe, exceeding fleet,
 Whose skin full many a dusky spot did stain."

And of the lion :

" He seemed as if upon me he would leap,
With head upraised, and hunger fierce and wild,
So that a shudder through the air did sweep ;
Then a she-wolf, with all ill greed defiled,
Laden with hungry leanness terrible,
That many nations of their peace beguiled."

—*Hell*, i. 31-51.

I add two more descriptions to the gallery of pictures from bird life :

" As bird, within the leafy home it loves,
Upon the nest its sweet young fledglings share,
Resting, while night hides all that lives and moves,
Who, to behold the objects of her care,
And find the food that may their hunger stay,
Tasks in which all grave labours grateful are,—
Forestalls the dawn, and, on an open spray,
With keen desire awaits the sun's clear light,
And upward looks as gleams the new-born day !"

—*Par.* xxiii. 1-9.

" E'en as the doves, who through the meadows stray,
Gathering or grain or darnel tranquilly,
And not a whit their wonted pride display,
If aught they see which them doth terrify,
Will of a sudden cease to seek their food,
Because a greater care constrains to fly."

—*Purg.* ii. 124-129.

The two following passages tell their own tale :

" As when a lizard, 'neath the fiery reign
O' the dog-days, seeks to change its hedgerow bourne,
It seems like lightning to dart o'er the plain."

—*Hell*, xxv. 79-81.

" As swarm of bees that deep in flowerets move,
One moment, and the next again return,
Where that their labour doth its sweetness prove."

—*Par.* xxxi. 7-10.

But beyond these descriptions of animal and inanimate life, we have a whole gallery of pictures drawn from human, and especially from child, life. There are, I conceive, few indications that a poet possesses the higher and deeper elements of his art more precious than such pictures. Among our own poets, Wordsworth and Keble will, I imagine, be recognised as special examples of that excellent gift, but I think that the passages I am about to bring together

may well challenge comparison with either. If I were an artist with a gift like Reynolds, or Eddis, or Sant, I should desire no better exercise of my power than to paint them all, and to publish the collection as an illustrated companion to Keble's *Lyra Innocentium*. The fact that, in almost every case, the mother is brought into the picture, as well as the child, seems to me to throw light on Dante's character, possibly also on his own boy-life, all the more valuable because his direct references to that boy-life are few and far between.

A mother risks her life for her child, as Virgil rescues his friend :

"Then suddenly my Guide his arms did fling
Around me, as a mother, roused by cries,
Sees the fierce flames around her gathering,
And takes her boy, nor ever halts, but flies,
Caring for him than for herself far more,
Though one scant shift her only robe supplies."

—*Hell*, xxiii. 37-42.

That last homely, individualising touch seems to me to be one that could only come from an eye-witness, which may probably have come from one on whom the scene had made an indelible impression, because he had himself been a sharer in it, and I ask myself, Was the Florentine poet that child saved from the burning fire? Here is the mother as the child's refuge in trouble :

"I to the left with wistful look did start,
As when an infant seeks his mother's breast,
When fear or anguish vex his troubled heart."

—*Purg.* xxx. 43-45.

Here is the child that has done wrong confessing its fault :

"As little children, dumb with shame's keen smart,
Will listening stand with eyes upon the ground,
Owning their faults with penitential heart,
So then stood I."—*Purg.* xxxi. 64.

And here a *replica* of the first picture :

"Oppressed with this amazement, to my guide
I turned me, like a little child who goes
For refuge there where he doth most confide ;
And she, like mother, who, to give repose,
Turns quickly to her pale and breathless boy,
With voice that's wont to soothe him and compose."

—*Par.* xxii. 1-6.

And here, the child's smile and act of content as the type of the joy of the souls in Paradise :

" And as a babe that to its mother's breast,
When it hath had its fill, doth stretch its hand,
So they their love by flame made manifest."

—*Par.* xxiii. 121-123.

And here, the mother's love under the most trying of all afflictions :

" And she, first breathing out a pitying sigh,
Turned her full gaze, with such a look on me,
As mother on her boy's insanity."—*Par.* i. 100-102.

And here, his picture of the new-created soul :

" Forth from His hands whose acts His love attest,
Ere yet it be, as child the soul is brought,
Weeping and smiling, prattling and caressed,—
The soul so simple that it knoweth nought
But this, that from a joyous Maker sprung,
It turns to that which with delight is fraught."

—*Purg.* xvi. 85-90.

So far I have, I think, furnished sufficient materials for an induction. The reader will have felt, if I mistake not, that they supply proof that simply in his character as an observer of the natural phenomena that met his eyes every day in his walks near Florence or Ravenna, apart from all higher thoughts and deeper meanings, Dante holds his place among the sovran poets of the world.

II.

I pass from the phenomena of animal and child life to the scenes which met Dante's eyes in the cities of Italy. And, first, I note as eminently characteristic of Italian mediæval life, a picture of the winner and the loser in street gambling :

" When game of *Zara* cometh to an end,
The loser stays behind in sorrowing mood ;
Goes o'er his throws again, and fain would mend ;
Off with the other moveth all the crowd ;
One walks before, one closely clings behind,
And, at his side, of notice one is proud.
He pauses not, this friend nor that doth mind,
And he who gets his hand no more doth press ;
Thus through the throng his safe way he doth wind."

—*Purg.* vi. 1-9.

Rome supplies, as might be expected, more than one painting to the gallery. Take, *e.g.*, this of the crowds of pilgrims who, in the first great jubilee proclaimed by Pope Boniface VIII. in A.D. 1300, were seen crossing the Bridge of St. Angelo at Rome, to the old Basilica of St. Peter's :

"E'en as the Romans, for the countless host
That cross the bridge in year of jubilee,
Of their new way of passing o'er may boast,
For on one side all turn their face to see
The Castle, as to Peter's shrine they go,
And on the other to the Mount move free."

—*Hell*, xviii. 28-33.

Or this, of the emotions of these pilgrims as they looked on the Veronica or sacred napkin, on which it was believed that the features of the Christ had been impressed :

"As one who from Croatia, say, draws nigh,
Upon our Veronica's face to glance,
Whom the old story does not satisfy,
Says, while he sees it, as in wondering trance,
'My Lord, my Jesus Christ, true deity,
Was this indeed Thy very countenance!'"

—*Par.* xxxi. 103-108.

Or this, of the reverence with which they looked on the very stones of the Eternal City, as contrasted with the rougher northern regions from which they came, and in which he finds a parallel to his own emotions as he entered Heaven :

"If strangers, bred beneath some far-off sky,
Where day by day revolves fair Helice,
With that her son in whom her joy doth lie,¹
Gazing on Rome and all her majesty,
Were struck with wonder, when the Lateran
Was eminent above all things that be,
I, who to God had now passed on from man,
From time to that which shares eternal day,
From Florence to a people just and sane—
Think what amazement then my soul did sway :
Truly with this, and with the joy, 'twas mine
To have no wish to hear, nor words to say :
And, as a pilgrim who, with eager eyne,
Finds, gazing on a temple, full delight,
And hopes some day to tell how fair the shrine,

¹ Helice = Callisto, the constellation *Ursa Major*. Her "son" = the Pole-star.

So, as I walked amid that living light,
On all around I also cast mine eye,
Now up, now down, and circling left or right."

—*Par.* xxxi. 31-48.

Or this, of the dockyard at Venice :

" As when Venetian ships in dock remain,
The clammy pitch boils up in winter-tide,
To fit their unsound hulls for sea again ;
They cannot put to sea, so there abide ;
One mends the timber and one caulks anew
The ribs of ship that many a sea has tried ;
There one the stem and one the stern drives through ;
Some fashion oars and some the cordage twine,
The mainsail or the mizen some renew."—*Hell*, xxi. 7-15.

The whole scene of bustling activity rises before me as I read the lines, and I seem to see the Florentine poet gazing with interest on a life so unlike his own, accompanied, it may be, by Marco Polo, the great Eastern traveller, who was then living at Venice, and from whose life Dante may have heard tales of far-off lands, of the constellation of the Southern Cross, never seen in our northern latitudes, of the disappearance of the Pole Star and the Great Bear, of the surpassing brightness of the stars in the tropical regions to which the enterprise of his friend had carried him. (*Purg.* i. 23.)

Or take the scene, almost as characteristic of modern as of mediæval Italy, as one passes by the doors of churches on some great festival for which indulgences have been promised :

"E'en thus the blind, whose means of life are stopped,
Stand at our Pardons asking alms for bread,
And one man's head is on another's dropped,
That pity may in others' hearts be shed,
Not only at the sound of words they speak,
But at the sight which no less grief hath bred."

—*Purg.* xiii. 61-65.

The leaning tower of Bologna, known as the Carisenda, supply another picture :

" And as to eyes that Carisenda see,
When 'neath its sloping tower there comes a cloud,
It seems to bend with motion contrary."

—*Hell*, xxxi. 136-138.

Or take the wilder landscape of the Casentino Valley of the Upper Arno :

"The little streamlets that from each green hill
Of Casentino down to Arno go,
And form full many a cool and pleasant rill."

—*Hell*, xxx. 64-66.

Or this, of the torrent of Acquacheta in the Apennines:

"I followed him, and soon a spot we neared,
Where sound of falling waters came so hoarse,
That, when we spake, our voices scarce were heard.
E'en as that stream which takes its separate course,
And from Mount Veso eastward first doth flow,
And down the Apennino's left slope pours,
Which men above as Acquacheta know,
Ere it rush down into its torrent bed,
And lose that name at Forli far below,
Above San Benedetto murmurs dread,
From Alps, whence it in single leap doth run,
Where should be room for full a thousand head."

—*Hell*, xvi. 91-102.

Or this of the birthplace of St. Francis:

"Between Tupino and the streams that break,
From the hill chosen by Ubaldo blest,
A lofty mountain fertile slope doth make;
Perugia heat and cold from that high crest
Feeleth, and Gualdo and Nocera pine
Behind it, by their heavy yoke oppress;
On that slope, where less steeply doth incline
The hill, was born into this world a sun,
Bright as this orb doth oft o'er Ganges shine."

—*Par.* xi. 43-51.

Or this of the scenery round the Lago di Garda and the river
that flows from it:

"A lake there is in our fair Italy,
At the Alp's foot that shuts Lamagna¹ in,
Benaco, where the Tyrol low doth lie.
By thousand streams and more the Apennine,
I trow is bathed, which in the lake are pent,
Camonica and Garda's bounds within.
A place there is midway where he of Trent
Chief Shepherd, and Verona's, Brescia's too,
Might each give blessing, if that way he went;
There Peschiera's fortress, bulwark true
To face the strength of them of Bergamo,
And Brescia, where a lower shore we view;

¹ Germany.

There needs must be that all the waters go,
 Which fair Benaco's bosom fails to hold,
 And through green pastures, like a river, flow.
 Soon as the current leaves its channel old,
 No more Benaco, Mincio it is styled,
 Till at Governo with the Po 'tis rolled ;
 Nor far it runs before a low waste wild
 It finds, and spreads into a marshy lake,
 And taints the summer with its mist defiled."

—*Hell*, xx. 61-81.

It is time, however, that I should pass on to that section of my inquiry which brings before us Dante's power of observing and describing the phenomena which met his eyes in regions that were altogether new to him, and in which we follow him in his wanderings as a traveller. That, as the experience of all readers of travels will bear witness, is the test that makes the difference, as in the old story of "Eyes and no Eyes, or the Art of Seeing," in Mrs. Barbauld's "Evenings at Home," between the observing and the unobserving eye, between the dull apathetic intellect which sees indistinctly, and remembers vaguely, and that which is quick to see new phenomena, "wax to receive and marble to retain." A comparison of such passages will have the further interest of helping us to trace the poet's wanderings, and so to fill up what would otherwise be as blank pages in his biography.

Here then is his description of what modern engineering has transformed into the great Cornice Road along the shores of the Mediterranean, but which was then a steep and precipitous mountain path testing both the eyes and the legs of travellers :

"Now towards the mountain's base our footsteps sped,
 And there we found the precipice so steep,
 That all in vain had been the nimblest tread.
 The rocks that Lerici and Turbia keep,
 The barest and most broken, were a stair
 Compared with that, which one might lightly leap."

—*Purg.* iii. 46-51.

Here is another picture from the western section of the same road, a reminiscence probably of the same journey :

"Oft doth the peasant churl a gap more wide
 Close with a pitchfork full of briar or thorn,
 When the grape's clusters are by autumn dyed,

Than was the pathway where we then did turn,
 My Guide and I, as I behind him sped,
 When as that troop away from us was borne.
 Sanleo one may scale, down Noli tread,
 To Bismantova's topmost height aspire,
 With feet alone ; here needs one wings instead,
 Swift wings, I mean, and pinions of desire.
 We mounted up that broken rock-path through ;
 And on each side its barriers hemmed us in,
 And the ground called for feet and hand-grasp too."
 —*Purg.* iv. 19-33.

Or these memories of travels on the higher Alps, possibly St. Gothard, or the Simplon, or Mount Cenis. He describes what he sees in Hell :

"And over all the sand a fiery spray
 Showered rain of flakes of ever-spreading flame."

And this, he says, was :

"Like snow upon the Alps on windless day."
 —*Hell*, xiv. 28-30.

He remembers the bewildering, blinding mist which so often baffles the mountain traveller :

"Bethink thee, Reader, if, on Alpine height,
 A cloud hath wrapt thee, through which thou hast seen,
 As the mole through its membrane sees the light,
 How when the vapours moist and dense begin
 Themselves to scatter, then the sun's bright sphere
 All feebly enters in the clouds between."—*Purg.* xvii. 1-6.

He describes the great landslide near the Lago di Garda :

"The place where down the bank our way we took
 Was Alp-like, and the view that met us there,
 Such that for fear each eye away would look.
 So doth that ruin beyond Trent appear
 Which on the flank into the Adige dashed
 Through earthquake, or through prop that failed to bear ;
 For from the mountain-top whence down it crashed,
 E'en to the plain the rock so falls away,
 That one above might climb o'er stones detached."
 —*Hell*, xii. 1-9.

Let us follow him further on in his journey through France. He comes to Arles with its old Roman cemetery, filled with Sarcophagi, now known as the Alyscamp (Champs Elysées) :

"As where the Rhone stagnates o'er Arli's plain,
Or as at Pola near Quarnaro's shore,
Italia's limit, bordered by the main,
With sepulchres the earth is studded o'er."—*Hell*, ix. 112-115.

He narrates the triumphant flight of the Roman Eagle under Cæsar in words which, though not descriptive, speak, I think, of the accurate knowledge of personal travel :

"And what it did from Vero to the Rhene,
By Isar, Arar, Seine, and every vale
That pays its tribute to the Rhone was seen."
—*Par.* vi. 58-60.

We follow him further on in his wanderings, and find him attending lectures in the schools at Paris :

"There dwelleth Sigieri's light eterne,
Who, lecturing in the street surnamed of straw,¹
Truths syllogised that made men's envy burn."
—*Par.* x. 136-138.

Or further East to the rivers of Germany, probably the Moselle or Rhine :

"As boats that oft the river's banks receive,
And half is in the water, half on land ;
And as, in clime where full-fed Germans live,
The beaver for his foray takes his stand." ²—*Hell*, xvii. 19-22.

That route takes him naturally to Cologne, and there he notes a local peculiarity of monastic dress, which he had not seen in Italy, and of which the souls of the hypocrites he sees in Hell remind him :

"A painted people there met our regard,
Who round and round still moved with tardy pace,
Weeping, with faces worn and spent and marred ;
Cloaks had they, with hoods low o'er eyes and face
Down-hanging, made in fashion like to those
Which at Cologne are worn by monkish race."
—*Hell*, xxiii. 58-63.

From Cologne we follow him through the Netherlands to Bruges and the adjacent country :

¹ The Rue du Fouarre—the Haymarket of Mediæval Paris—where, it was said, the students used to sit on bundles of straw, listening to their lecturers.

² The beaver, it may be noted, is not found in the rivers of Italy or France.

"Now on a margin firm we travel o'er ;
 And the stream's vapour so the heat doth slake
 It saves from fire the water and the shore.
 E'en as 'twixt Bruges and Guissant Flemings make,
 Fearing the flood that on their sea-beach rose,
 A bank whereon the ocean's strength may break."

—*Hell*, xv. 1-6.

The Guissant here named I identify with Wissant on the French coast, between Calais and Boulogne. It is now a poor village, a mile or two from the sea, and the sand has silted up its harbour, and Calais has risen as it decayed ; but in Dante's time it was the port of embarkation, as Calais is now, for England ; and, I may add, it was a place which few travellers would, in the common course of things, visit, except for the purpose of so embarking. This alone would make it probable that Dante took ship there and sailed up the Thames to London ; and so we are able, as it were, to welcome the great poet's arrival in England. Of that visit we have at least one trace in his poem. He meets in Hell with Guy de Montfort, the assassin of an English prince, Henry, son of Richard, Earl of Cornwall, the brother of Henry III. :

"A shade he showed us, on one side, alone,
 And said, 'In God's own lap¹ he pierced the heart,
 Which held in honour on the Thames is known.'"

—*Hell*, xii. 118-120.

As a matter of history, the heart of the murdered prince, enclosed in a golden vase, was placed on the tomb of Edward the Confessor in Westminster Abbey, and so far we have reasonable ground for thinking of Dante as having walked to and fro in what we may well call the great national sanctuary of England's history. That inference is confirmed by a line in Boccaccio's Epistle to Petrarch, in which he speaks of Dante as having visited *Parisios dudum extremosque Britannos* ; and Boccaccio, we may remember, was intimately acquainted with Dante's nephew, and with many Florentines who had been his personal friends. It is strengthened further by the statement of an Italian bishop, Giovanni da Serravalle, who, in 1414, during the Session of the Council of Constance, wrote a Latin translation of Dante's great poem, at the request of two

¹ The young prince was murdered as he was in the act of receiving the consecrated Host, and was thus, as it were, in the very bosom of God.

English prelates, one of whom (I name the fact with a natural local interest) was Bishop Bubwith of Bath and Wells, the founder of our Wells Almshouse, the builder of part of our Cathedral, and he states that Dante visited London, and had lodgings in Cheapside, and further, that he studied at Oxford as well as Paris. That statement seems to me, as I have said in vol. i. p. lvii., to be in itself probable enough. It was characteristic of that period of European history, when books were few and dear, that students seeking for wider knowledge went from one country to another, and scholars of all nations were, therefore, in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries to be found at Oxford. And at Oxford, during the earlier part of Dante's life, there was a scholar, Roger Bacon, born at Ilchester, in Somersetshire, whose scientific reputation was spread over Western Europe, who had written three encyclopædic treatises and sent them to Pope Clement IV. at Rome, who was a "Master of those who know" in all the sciences in which Dante most delighted—astronomy, mathematics, optics, music. I have elsewhere (*Contemporary Review*, December 1881) shown that there are coincidences between the writings of the Oxford and those of the Florentine student, which can scarcely be accounted for except on the supposition that Dante, the younger of the two, was acquainted with the writings of the elder. If I cannot say that his residence at Oxford takes its place as an established historical fact, it seems to me one of those cases in which the convergence of tradition and internal evidence tends to establish a very high degree of probability.¹

Shall I startle my readers if I go one step further and trace the poet's travels to a region in which I, for one, have, as I have just said, a strong personal interest? They shall hear and judge. He is describing his vision in Paradise, of the souls of the great teachers of theology, who move circling round and round, as they chant the praises of the Ever Blessed Three in One. And this is what he says :

"Then, like a clock, that calls us, as by law,
 What time the Bride of God from sleep doth rise,
 With matin praise her Bridegroom's love to draw,
 When the one wheel upon the other flies,
 Sounding '*Ding-dong, ding-dong*,' with note so sweet,
 That souls attuned feel love's high ecstasies,

¹ I welcome the fact that Mr. H. C. Maxwell Lyte, in his *History of the University of Oxford* (pp. 89, 90), recognises the probability.

So saw I then that glorious circle fleet
 Around, and voice to voice make melody,
 So rich that none may know it as complete,
 Save there, where joy endures eternally."—*Par. x. 139-148.*

Clocks of that description were, in Dante's time, far from common, and I take it that he describes it because he looked on it as a piece of mechanism specially noteworthy. I cannot, so far as I have searched, and I have applied to experts of high authority, find any record of such a clock in Italy, Germany, or France, before the middle of the fourteenth century. But in England there was, at some time or other in the first quarter of that century, a clock such as Dante describes, and it was to be found then at the great Benedictine Abbey of Glastonbury. It is to be seen now in the Cathedral of Wells, and the figures revolve still, as they or their predecessors revolved nearly six centuries ago.¹ Can that, I ask myself, represent the clock that Dante looked on? Did he come to Glastonbury? If I am unable to answer that question in the affirmative, I can at least suggest some confirmation of such an answer over and above the correspondence between the clock and the description.

1. The fact that such a clock existed would, we cannot doubt, be much talked of among all men of theoretical or applied science. The numerous pilgrims who came to Glastonbury would carry away with them, whithersoever they went, a report of its wondrous mechanism. Dante was pre-eminently the kind of man likely to be interested in such a novelty, and to think it worth while to take a long journey to examine it.

2. Among the earlier forms of European literature, which Dante studied, few seem to have exercised a greater fascination over him than those of the cycle of the Arthurian legends. He refers to them in the story of Francesca (*Hell*, v. 128); in *Hell*, xxxii. 62; in *Par.* xvi. 15, and frequently in his prose writings. For us, even with the revived interest in the story of Arthur which may be traced to Lord Tennyson's poem, those legends do not excite any very passionate enthusiasm. We may discuss the localities named in them, but these localities are not the object of our pilgrimages. But in the fourteenth century it was

¹ The actual works of the clock are, at present, lent to the South Kensington Museum, but the knights in armour that move when the clock strikes are still in the Cathedral.

otherwise. An Italian poet of that period (Fazio degli Uberti, grandson of the Farinata of *Hell*, x. 32), who wrote a kind of poetical guide-book for travellers, in triple rhyme, mentions, when he comes to speak of England, the things which were indispensable for every traveller to see, and among these were the Tower of Guinevere, Merlin's Cave, and the ruined Palace of Camelot; and Camelot is identified with South Cadbury in Somerset. I need scarcely remind my readers that Glastonbury was, in its turn, identified with the centre of all the Arthurian stories, that it was the Isle of Avalon, the burial-place of the heroic king. I fancy that Dante would have gone a long way round to have seen that grave, and to picture to himself the scenery of the *Morte d'Arthur*.

3. Lastly, recent researches, for communicating the result of which I have to thank Bishop Hobhouse and Canon Church, have shown that in the first quarter of the fourteenth century, and probably for a long time before, there were constant business transactions between bankers of Florence, on the one side, and the Bishop of Bath and Wells, and the Dean and Chapter of the Cathedral City, on the other. The bankers collected first fruits and annates, and a six years' tithe for the crusade contemplated by Pope Clement V. and the Emperor Henry VII. They also acted as collectors of tithes and rents for foreign non-resident ecclesiastics, who held livings in the diocese. Their agents must have been going backwards two or three times a year between Florence, Paris, London, and Somerset. And the foremost—at this time, almost the only—name in these transactions is that of those who are described in one document as the *Societas Bardorum*, in another, as "*Nos chers Marchands de la Compagnie des Bardi*." And Bardi—Simon de' Bardi—was, it will be remembered, the name of the rich merchant prince who married Dante's Beatrice. Inter-course between the poet and the firm of bankers was probably at one time, during the seven years of Beatrice's married life, of which Dante's *Vita Nuova* is the record, very frequent and familiar. They took opposite sides, it is true, in politics, and probably, after Dante's exile, they did not see much of each other, but the acquaintance, while it lasted, would probably lead to Dante's knowing of the news which the Bardi agents brought back from Somerset, and so the wonders of the clock and the grave at Avalon may have both become objects of special interest to him.

I think I have made it not incredible that the great poet may have visited Glastonbury. If so, I cannot for a moment believe that he would have turned back on his return journey without having been to Wells. He may have gazed on the glories of Bishop Jocelyn's then recent work, on the sculptures of its west front, and may have worshipped at its altars.¹

¹ One other fact may be mentioned as supplying points of local contact, though I feel that, as yet, it suggests questions rather than conclusions. *Purg.* xxxiii. 78. Beatrice bids Dante keep in memory the apocalyptic vision with which that section of the poem ends:

"As pilgrims, palm in hand, their path pursue."

The image is drawn from the common practice of pilgrims to the Holy Land in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. They brought back a palm-branch as a token that they had completed their pilgrimage, and might claim the indulgence promised on its completion. Commonly they brought their palms to some church or sacred station and laid them on the altar as a votive offering. This is the explanation given by experts of the fact that the burial-ground attached to the Cathedral of Wells, in which there formerly stood a Lady Chapel, destroyed under Edward VI., was known in old records both as the "Palm" and the "Pardon" Churchyard. I am not aware that such names are found anywhere else in England, or, indeed, in Europe, and I ask the question, Did Dante see the procession of palm-bearing pilgrims within the walls of the Cathedral?

NOTE.

As these sheets are passing through the press, another contribution to Dante literature, connected with the subject of this *Study*, appears in a volume of *Sunday Readings with the Children*, bearing as its title *How Dante Climbed the Mountain*, by Rose E. Selfe (Cassell & Co.) I have read it with delight and joy. It was an original, perhaps it might have seemed an over-bold, thought to seek to adapt Dante to the school-room; but I venture to predict for the result a wide measure of success. It seems to me at once more attractive and more ennobling than books of the *Agathos* and *Rocky Island* type, which have yet enjoyed a still increasing popularity. And then it has the merit, which they have not, of leading on to something beyond itself, of placing before a child's mind thoughts which it may afterwards develop, outlines which it may afterwards fill up. It may lead on naturally in after years to the study of one of the masters of those who know—of one of the great quaternions of the world's poets—and of the history of the times in which he lived. I can desire nothing better for the children whom I love most than that they should become familiar with it. I should feel sure that boys as they read it would feel in their spirits that "gush of manliness" of which Coleridge spoke as flowing from Dante's words; that girls would find in it a safeguard against the follies and frivolities that may tempt them in their womanhood, without reading a line that would make them less pure in heart than Beatrice.

STUDY IV.

PORTRAITS OF DANTE.



Of the many pictures, engravings, busts, which purport to represent the author of the *Commedia*, two only, those which form the frontispieces to the two volumes of this translation, have any claim to be regarded as authentic likenesses. It may be well to give some account of each, based for the most part upon the following papers in the *Transactions* of the *Deutsche Dante Gesellschaft*.

- (1.) Der Schädel Dante's, by H. Welcker. I. pp. 35-56.
- (2.) Die Todten Maske, das Florentiner Fresco-bildniß und die Kiste des Frate Santi, by Karl Witte. I. pp. 57-71.
- (3.) Dante's Portrait, by Theodor Savi. II. pp. 261-330.

I. THE BARGELLO PORTRAIT.

In the *Life* of Giotto, written circ. 1405 by Filippo Villani, it is recorded that that painter had introduced portraits of himself and of Dante in a painting on the walls of the chapel of the Palace of the Podestà, now known as that of the Bargello (= chief of police). No mention of the portrait occurs in the *Life* of Dante by the same writer, nor in that of Boccaccio, though the latter gives a somewhat full description of Dante's personal appearance. Bruni of Arezzo (*d.* 1444), in his *Life* of the poet, is, in like manner, silent as to the Bargello portrait, but speaks of one "by an eminent painter of Dante's time" that was to be seen in the Church of Santa Croce. Manetti (*d.* 1459), Dante's next biographer, speaks of both portraits as extant in his time, and ascribes both to Giotto. Filelfo, who followed Manetti, mentions only the Santa Croce portrait. Vellutelli follows him early in the sixteenth century in this exclusion of the Bargello portrait. Landino towards the close of the fifteenth century (say 1500) names both with the significant words "*resta ancora*."

With this we close the *catena* of testimony from the earlier biographers. We enter on the evidence supplied by the early historians of art. Of these, Ghiberti (*d.* 1455) speaks of Giotto as having executed paintings for the chapel of the Podestà Palace, but makes no mention of Dante's portrait. Vasari in his *Lives of Painters* seems to take a special interest in noticing whatever connects his own art with the name of Dante, and names no less than five portraits: (1) by himself in the chapel of the monastery at Rimini; (2) by Lorenzo Monaco (circ. 1370) in the Church of the Trinità at Florence; (3) a wall-painting by Taddeo Gaddi (*d.* 1352) in Santa Croce in the same city; (4) he speaks of the Podestà Palace portrait as still seen in his own time, and while omitting the mention of Giotto having painted his own likeness, states—and he is the first to state it—that the same picture included portraits of Brunetto Latini and Corso Donati. In yet another passage (p. 1087) in his *Life* of Michael Angelo, Vasari speaks of a portrait of Dante by Giotto in Santa Croce. We are left to conjecture whether this is identical with the painting which, as we have seen, he elsewhere ascribes to Gaddi, or whether the historian has, through a lapse of memory, substituted Santa Croce for the Palace of the Podestà. Anyhow the Santa Croce picture has disappeared, probably in 1566, when the church was subject to extensive alterations. At some unknown date, probably in the seventeenth century, the chapel in the Podestà Palace ceased to be used as such, and was covered with plaster. The palace became the residence of the Bargello, and the picture seemed to be forgotten.

With the revival of Dante studies in Italy attention was naturally drawn to the passages in Villani and Vasari. Moreni, about the beginning of the present century, states that he had sought for them, as others had done before him, for two years in vain. Missirini, who wrote a *Life* of the poet, made a like ineffectual attempt in 1832. At last, in 1848, the work was taken in hand by Aubrey Bezzel, Richard Henry Wilde of the U.S.A., and Seymour Kirkup, an English artist. They obtained permission from the authorities of Florence to clear the chapel

and remove the plaster, and Marini, a painter of Florence, was associated with them in the work. The walls were so covered that there was nothing to guide them, and the process of removing the plaster bit by bit went on slowly. At last on July 21 the long-sought-for goal was reached, and men saw the face of Dante as his contemporaries had seen it. The joy of the discovery was, however, marred by the fact that a nail which Marini had driven into the wall to support a portion of the scaffolding had gone straight through the eye. Matters were not mended when the artist undertook to remedy the disaster by painting a new eye and generally improving (!) the picture, altering the form and colour of the cap, and, in order to avoid shocking the feelings of the then Government by the revolutionary tricolour of the white and green and red which Giotto had used for Dante's dress (we note the colours as those of Beatrice in *Purg.* xxx. 31-36), turning the green into a dark chocolate. With that "counterfeit resemblance" the Dante pilgrims who visit the Bargello Chapel have now to be content, as far as contentment under such conditions is possible.

Happily, in the short interval in which it was possible, something was done towards a more faithful and reverent reproduction. Kirkup applied for leave to make a copy of the picture as it was found, and was refused. A silver key, however, secured his admission to the chapel in entire privacy, and he was locked in till the evening. He took a tracing of the outline, made a careful drawing on paper, and gave them, with a coloured sketch which he had secretly made on one of the days of public exhibition, to Lord Vernon. From these materials combined, the chromo-lithograph, published by the Arundel Society, was prepared by Mr. Vincent Brooks, and I am indebted to the same artist for that which forms the frontispiece of the first volume of my translation.

For twenty years the authenticity of the portrait was undisputed as being by Giotto. In 1864, however, in connexion with the great sex-centenary festival of Dante's birth in the following year, the question was mooted and discussed in journals, and the Minister of Education referred it to two experts, Gaetano Milanesi and Luigi Passerini. On July 9, 1864, they presented a report in which they came to the conclusion that Giotto was not the painter, and that the portrait is, though of earlier date, less trustworthy than that by Michelino in the Duomo or that in the *Codex Riccardiano*, both of which are of the fifteenth century.

The grounds on which this conclusion rests, and in its turn is questioned, are mainly these:—
(1.) In 1332 the Palace of the Podestà was nearly destroyed by fire (*Vill.* x. 109). The text of the *editio princeps* of Villani indeed says "totally destroyed" (*tutto il detto palagio*), but as there is no previous mention of the palace in the passage where the fact occurs, experts have suggested "*tutto il tetto del palagio*" ("all the roof"), as probably, it is urged, the true reading. The chapel is not mentioned. Villani would scarcely have passed over the destruction of its art treasures. Had they perished or been injured, Giotto, who lived till January 1336, had time to restore them. There is accordingly no sufficient ground for rejecting Giotto's authorship to be found in the fire of 1332.

(2.) In 1343, according to the Commissioners, the palace was again damaged by fire, or otherwise in the tumults connected with the expulsion of Duke Walter of Athens. Villani xii. 17) gives an account of these tumults, but makes no mention of any fire injuring the palace, nor does any such mention occur in the histories of Florence by Bruni and Machiavelli. The two Commissioners give no authorities, and in the absence of further evidence a verdict of "*not proven*" must, it is believed, be given as far as this second objection is concerned.

(3.) Another doubt rests on the various readings, in the old Italian text of F. Villani's Life of Giotto and that of the Latin original. The former states that Giotto's portrait of Dante was a wall-painting, the other that it was *in tabulâ altaris*, i.e. a separately framed altar-piece. It is inferred that the translator altered the Latin text because he saw the fresco painting which was discovered by Mr. Kirkup and his fellow-workers, and therefore that this was not the portrait of which Villani had borne record. Against that inference Paur sets the facts:—
(1) that F. Villani died in 1405; (2) that the translation speaks of a secretary of the republic, Colluccio Piero, who died in 1406, as living when he wrote, and draws from them the inference that the translation was made in the lifetime of Villani, under the eye of the author, and that the statement as to the portrait being a wall-painting was therefore the correction of an error. On the whole, then, in spite of the report of the Florentine Commissioners, there seems sufficient reason for adhering to the first conclusion of the discoverers of the Bargello portrait that they had found the long-lost treasure.

The subjects of the other paintings of the chapel are, at any rate, thoroughly Dantesque in character. There is a picture of Hell, in which Lucifer appears as Dante describes him in *H.* xxxiv.; another of Paradise, above a window, with figures of contemporary characters below it. In the former the Christ is seated on a throne of clouds, surrounded by angels, adored by male saints on one side, by female on the other: among the latter, on the right of

the spectator, a figure wearing a crown over his long flowing hair. Near it is a group of three figures, the middle one being that recognised as Dante. On the left of the window is a figure in the red mantle of a cardinal; kneeling before him is that of a Podestà of Florence. All the heads have the marked individuality which indicates portraiture. The two figures in close juxtaposition with Dante have been identified, on the strength of F. Villani and Vasari's statements, as those of Corso Donati and Brunetti Latini. The Florentine Commission see in the crowned figure the likeness of Robert, King of Naples, who visited Florence in 1310, and in the Cardinal, Bertrand del Poggetto, who came ten years later, and who was commissioned by John XXII. to have Dante's remains at Ravenna disinterred as those of a condemned heretic. Crowe and Cavalcaselle, on the other hand, identify the two forms with Charles of Valois and Cardinal Matteo d'Acquasparta, who came on an ineffectual mission of mediation from Boniface VIII. in 1300 and 1301, and conjecture accordingly that this was the date of the portrait.

Other objections with their answers may be briefly noted.

(1.) The arms of the Fieschi of Genoa are found near the figure kneeling before the Cardinal. The first of that family who filled the office of Podestà was Fedice dei Fieschi, in 1358. It has been inferred accordingly that that was the date of the painting. Cavalcaselle, however, shows that this had been painted over another coat of arms still dimly traceable, and so that argument goes for nothing.

(2.) In an inscription below the figure of the martyr Saint Venantius there is a date MCCC . . . and the Commissioners assume that xxx. would fill up the vacant space. Cavalcaselle inclines to xx. It may be questioned in either case whether the date belongs to more than the figure under which it stands.

(3.) Another inscription records that "HOC OPUS" was made in the time when the office of Podestà was filled by Fidesmini di Varana of Camerino, and the archives of Florence show that that office was twice held by members of the Fidesmini family, in 1311 and 1337. The Commissioners accept the later of the two dates as consistent with their general theory, Paur replies, following Cavalcaselle, that the words HOC OPUS, as a rule, refer to an individual picture, and not to a whole series covering the walls of a church or chapel, as in the Coronation of the Virgin in the Campo Santo of Pisa. Here again we have a *telum imbellè*. The authenticity of the Bargello portrait has not as yet been disproved; and if by Giotto, the next question that meets us is, when was it painted? The comparative softness of the outlines of chin and cheek hardly admit us to think of it as representing the poet at a later age than thirty, *sc.* in 1295, when Giotto, according to Vasari, was about twenty. If painted at a later date, it must have been from earlier sketches. It is scarcely conceivable that the painter would have introduced Dante's portrait after his condemnation and exile in 1302, and the fact that he is grouped with Corso Donati and Latini points to a time before the breach between the Neri and Bianchi had become prominent, or to one of the brief intervals in which, as has been suggested above, there was a temporary reconciliation between them brought about by the Cardinal of Acquasparta. The fact that other frescoes in the chapel reproduce apparently reminiscences from the *Inferno*, notably the three-headed Lucifer, the Centaur, the sinner carrying his head in his hand, admits of the explanation (1) that they may have been executed at a later date, or (2) that Giotto was already acquainted with some of the leading conceptions of the poem, the commencement of which Dante fixes in 1300. A few points in the picture itself call more or less for special notice. (1.) The hair is entirely covered by the cap, and so the picture neither confirms nor refutes the conjecture based on the "*flavescere*" of *Ecl.* ii. that it was auburn-tinted in his youth. (2.) The dress corresponds with that in the Michelino portrait in the Duomo of Florence, and was apparently the ordinary civil dress of the upper class of the time and place. (3.) As in the portrait just named, there is a book under the left arm, which may be intended for the *Commedia*, or, more probably, looking to the date of the picture and the age of the figure, may serve as a general symbol of the student life. (4.) The right hand holds a twig on which hang three fruits, generally identified as pomegranates, in which men have found a symbol of the three kingdoms of the unseen world or of political unity, the many seeds of the pomegranate representing the multitude of citizens in the one polity, or, lastly, the "sweet fruits" for which the poet expresses his longing in *H.* xvi. 61. An allusive reference to the pomegranates is found in a MS. vision of one of the Alberti at the end of the fourteenth (?) century, in which the two poets Dante and Petrarch are described, the one crowned with laurel and the other holding a twig with "*dolci pomi*" on it, and to the book and the crimson dress in a sonnet of Pucci's and belonging to the next century. Fraticelli (*V. D.* 268) mentions another portrait with the pomegranates as to be seen in the Giotto frescoes of the Scrovigni Chapel at Padua; but no such figure is, as a matter of fact, to be found there. A figure at the left hand of

Giotto's "Triumph of Chastity" at Assisi has been identified with Dante, but Witte comes to the conclusion that it presents no adequate resemblance. My own conviction, I must add, is that the likeness is unmistakable.

II. THE PLASTER CAST.

In the Museum of Florence there is a cast of Dante's face, taken in plaster and afterwards coloured. Making allowance for the difference of age, the correspondence with the Bargello portrait cannot be mistaken. Even more striking is the resemblance to the two portraits of Dante in Raphael's pictures of "Apollo and the Muses" and the *Disputa*, and to the Michelino portrait. It is known to have been in 1735 in the possession of the Barons of Porcigliano as a treasured possession. From them it passed to the Torrigiani family, and was given or sold by them to the Museum. The tradition was that it was taken by order of Dante's friend, Guido da Polento of Ravenna, after the poet's death. Another like cast passed into the hands of Mr. Seymour Kirkup from those of the sculptor Bartolini, who obtained it at Ravenna. A third copy, which in 1831 was in the possession of the sculptor Stefano Ricci, and served as the basis of Fabri's medal in that year, has no traceable history. Of these, the second is represented by three photographs in Mr. Eliot Norton's privately printed volume *On the Original Portraits of Dante*, printed at Cambridge, Mass., U.S.A., in 1865, as a contribution to the great sex-centenary festival, and is the frontispiece of the present volume. He finds in the mask itself sufficient evidence of its genuineness (p. 14).

"It was plainly taken as a cast from a face after death. It has none of the characteristics which a fictitious and imaginative representation of the sort would be likely to present. It bears no trace of being a work of skilful and deceptive art. The difference in the fall of the two half-closed eyelids, the difference between the sides of the face, the slight deflection in the line of the nose, the droop of the corners of the mouth, and other delicate but not the less convincing indications, combine to show that it was in all probability taken directly from nature."

Comparing it with the Bargello portrait, he says (p. 18) of the latter:—"It is the same face with that of the mask, but the one is the face of a youth with all triumphal splendour on its brow, the other of a man burdened with the dust and injury of age."

L'ENVOI.

To

H. T. P.

THOU, too, companion of these twice ten years,
Through which in Dante's footsteps I have trod,
And, walking in the paths ordained of God,
Have shared with thee or anxious hopes or fears,
Must not lack greeting ere the hour appears
When I lay down my cherished Hermes-rod,
No more along the toilsome path to plod,
Where oft who sow in joy must reap in tears.
Now lowlier task awaits me, if indeed
The Saint of God find place below the bard ;
And there, too, as thine eyes the record read,
The task itself shall prove its great reward :
Thou wilt not mourn my change of labour when
I part from Dante and pass on to Ken.

Sept. 12th, 1887.

INDEX OF SUBJECTS AND NAMES.

Headings in Italics refer to subjects comprised in the Notes exclusively.

- Abbey of St. Maria at Florence, 95
 Abbeys endowed by Hugh, Marquis of Brandenburg, 95
 Abraham, 404
 Absolute will, 22
 Accedit verbum, &c., 321
 "Accidia," the fourth of the seven deadly sins, 395
 Ace, the, 85
 "Acerba" of Cecco d'Ascoli, 253
 Achæmenides, 341
 Acheron, 369
 Achilles, 336
 Acis, 341
 Acone, capture of, 92
 Acquacheta, 520
 Acquasparta, 71, 531
 Acre, 51, 64
Acta Sanctorum, 124, 371
 Actium, battle of, 32
 Adam, 73, 74, 76, 152, 153, 154, 155, 189, 285, 351
 Adam, his sin, 36
 Adam spoke Hebrew, 154
 Adam, length of his life in Paradise, 155
 Adam of Marsh, 400
 Adam, the Second, 74
 Adam of St. Victor, *see* "St. Victor"
 Addison, 431
 "Adhæsit pavimento," 387
 Adige, the river, 48, 247
 Adimari, 95, 100
Adoro Te devote, 148
 Adrian Shore, the, 25, 327, 333
 Adriatic Sea, the, 62, 340
 Adriatic, nautical vocabulary of, 134
 Egidius, 63
 Emilian land, the, 339, 340
 Eneas, 29, 30, 59, 83, 113, 327, 340
 Eolus, 507
 Eschylus, 12
 Ethiops, Christians shall be judged by, 112
 Etna, 43, 338, 339, 340, 341
 "Africa," Petrarch's Latin epic, 351, 416
 Agamemnon, 26
 Agapetus, 29, 30
 Aglauros, 304
 "Agnus Dei," 387
 Agostino, Frate, 71
 Aguglione, 92
 Alagnian, the, 179
 Alba Longa, 30
Alban's St., 59
 Alberico, the vision of, 127, 372, 391
Alberico, Count of Treviso, 47
 Alberighi, Church of St. Maria, 93
 Alberighi, the family, 93
 Alberigo de' Manfredi, 368, 413
 Albert of Austria, 112, 160, 374, 375
 Albert of Cologne, 56, 170
 Albertino Musatto, 326, 336
Alberto della Scala, 102
 Albigenes, 50, 60, 298, 478
 Alboin della Scala, 100
 Alcides (Hercules), 50, 328
 Alcmaeon, 22
Alcuin, 71
 Aldighieri, 86, 89, 90
 Alessandro Novello, Bishop of Feltro, 48
 Alessandro da Romena, 245
 Alessio Interminello, 413
 Alexander III., Pope, 17
 Alexander IV., Pope, 17
 Alexandria, 328
 Alexis, 333, 335
 Alfieri, 432
Alfred, King, 58
 Alietti, 95
 Alighieri family, 90
 "Alleluia dulce carmen," 137
 All Saints' Day, A.D. 1283, 228
 Alpha and Omega, 150
 Alphabetical Psalms, 261
 Alpheusibœus, 337, 338, 339, 341
 Alphonso III. of Aragon, 43, 114
 Alphonso X. of Castile, and his son Sancho, 113
 Alps, 31
 Alvernia, the rock of, 64
 Ambrose, St., 52, 57, 173
 Ambrose, the See of, 124
 Ambrosian Library at Milan, 205, 306, 311, 312, 313
 Amen, 80
 Amidei, 96
 "Amme," 80
 Amour, Wm. de St., 401
 Ampère, 470, 472
 Amyclas, 62, 63

- Ananias, 149
 Anachises, 83, 84, 113
 Ancona, the March of, 93
 Andrew III., King of Hungary, 114
 "Angel-bees," 179
 Angelico, Fra, 148, 284, 382
 Angelo, Michael, 284, 419, 434, 436
 Angelo, St., Bridge of, 578
 Angelo, St., castle of, 105
 Angela, bread of, 8, 145
 Angels, creation of, 37, 168
 Angels, the fallen, 148, 169
 Angels, whether they have memory, 170
 Angels need not speech, 351
 Angels, number of, 173
 Animals decorated for sale, 289
 Anj.u. the House of, 33, 113
 Anna, St., 189, 190
 Anonimo Fiorentino, 414
 Anselm, St., 20, 36, 38, 71, 73, 398
 Antandros, 32
 Antenor, 328
 Antenôra, 302
 Anthimû-, monophysite Patriarch of Constantinople, 29
 Anthropomorphic character of Byzantine and early Western art, 95
 Anthropomorphic language of the Bible, 19
 Antichrist, 72
 Antony, St., 128, 143, 172
 Antony, St., his fire, 172
 Antony, St., his swine, 172
 Ants, 511, 512
 Aonian hills, 329, 330, 331
 Apennine, 329
 Apennines, the Umbrian, 124
 "Aphorisms" used technically, 60
 Aphrodite Urania, 346
 Apocalypse, the Abbot Joachim's Commentary on, 72
 Apollo, 1, 2, 7, 73, 177, 306, 330, 335, 336, 357
 Apollo and Diana, Temple of, 127
 Apostolic band, the, 138
 Apples, 334, 335
 "Appropinquante jam fine sæculi," 186
 Aquinas, St. Thomas, 5, 6, 9, 12, 15, 18, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 36, 37, 39, 54, 56, 59, 60, 66, 68, 70, 71, 73, 74, 75, 76, 78, 116, 118, 119, 120, 140, 143, 145, 146, 147, 148, 150, 152, 153, 163, 165, 166, 167, 168, 169, 170, 171, 178, 181, 182, 186, 187, 192, 197, 286, 369, 376, 395, 398, 401, 471, 473, 494
 Aquino, 56
Arabic and Roman numerals, 164, 165
 Arabs, 31
 Aragon, the House of, 42
 Arar, the river, 31
 Arca family, 93
 Arcadia, 330
 Arcadians, 333
 Archangels, 166
 Archimandrite, 63
 Ardinghi, 93
 Arezzo, 73, 92
 Arezzo, expedition against, 204
 Arezzo, Guido of, see "Guido"
 Argenti, Filippo, 95, 367
 Argo, 194
 Argonauts, 8
 Argonautic expedition, 194
 Ariadne, 72
 Aries, 166, 167, 269, 333
 Aristotle, 12, 24, 45, 53, 58, 69, 74, 75, 98, 150, 162, 165, 286, 299, 365, 369, 376, 397, 500
 Arius, 76, 77, 319
 Ark of the covenant, 116
 Arles, 522
 Armenia, 393
 Armorial bearings of various families, 94, 95, 100
 Arno, the river, 64, 73, 204, 213, 245, 332, 334, 336
 Arno, inundation of, in A.D. 1333, 46
 Arnold, M., 448
 Arnold, Dr. T. 450
 Aroux, 59, 360, 477, 488, 493
 Arrigucci, 94
 Art, early Byzantine and Italian, 81, 195
 Art, Italian, Dante's influence on, 417, 419
 Art, its part in religious education, 401
Art, requirements of, 6
 Arthurian, see "Legends"
 Articles, the Thirty-Nine, 118, 120
 Article XIII., 118, 169
 Article XVII., 120
 Ary Scheffer, see "Scheffer"
 Ascesi, 62
 "Ass between two bundles of hay," 18
 Assisi, 60, 61, 62, 64, 129
 Assisi, frescoes at, 306, 390, 417
 Astræa, 298
 Astrology of the Middle Ages, 130
 Astronomy, mediæval, 133, 271
 Astronomy, Dante's display of, 268
 Athens, 99, 370
 Atlantic, the, 392
 Atonement, dogma of the, 36
 Atonement, the forensic view of, 36
 "Augusta," applied to the B. V. M., 189
 Augustine, St., 15, 20, 45, 52, 57, 58, 119, 120, 148, 150, 167, 177, 185, 186, 188, 192, 292, 360, 363, 370, 371, 382, 397, 429, 496
 Augustine rule, the, 172
 Augustus Cæsar, 32, 45
 Aureole, 81
 Aureole, of adolescence, 200
 Aureole of saints, 182
 Ausonia, 43
 Authorised Version of the Bible, 154
 Avarice, 295, 296
 Ave, 91
 Ave Maria, 17, 135, 189, 325
 "Ave Maris Stella," 135
 Averrhoes, 9, 59, 369, 376, 478
 Avicenna, 11
 Avignon, 42, 51, 52, 107, 126, 155, 156, 374
 Avignon, banquets at, 108
 Avignon, gold florins coined there by John XXII., 108
 "Avvegnache del Maggio," sonnet by Guido Guinicelli, 346

- Azzolino, see "Ezzelin da Romano"
 Babel, tower of, 154, 352
 "Babylonian captivity" at Avignon, 126
 "Babylonian ground," 137
 Baccalere, 139
 Bacchiglione (the river), 48
 Bacchus, 2, 72, 73, 339
 Bachenschwanz, 482
 Bacon, Francis, 10, 76, 105, 161, 163
 Bacon, Roger, 9, 11, 52, 59, 65, 66, 76, 160, 171, 196, 385, 395, 400
 Bacularius, 139
 Bagnoreggio, 71
 Bagpipes, 115
 Balearic Isles, the, 113
 Bannockburn, 113
 Baptism, 187, 188, 321
 Baptism, the lack of, 111, 119, 188
 Baptistry at Florence, 88
Batale of Marseilles, 50
 "Barbara Celarent," 71
 Barbarians, the Northern, 180
 Bardi, House of, 94, 114, 527
 Bardi, Simon de', 286, 527
 Bargello portrait, the, 345, 417, 427, 434, 529, 531
 Bari, city of, 43
 Barlow, Dr. H. C., 466 n.
 Baron, name given to peers of the heavenly court, 142, 144, 362
 Barucci family, 94
 Basilica, 145
 Basilica of St. Peter at Rome, 152
Bassett, Rev. F. T., 146
 "BE or ICE," 35
 Bears, the, zodiacal sign, 7
 "Beati quorum tecta," 388
 Beatific Vision, the, 15, 130, 190, 308, 403
 Beatrice, 3, 4, 6, 8, 11, 13, 16, 17, 18, 20, 22, 23, 26, 27, 28, 35, 40, 47, 54, 55, 56, 60, 65, 78, 79, 80, 81, 82, 84, 85, 90, 94, 97, 98, 103, 104, 105, 121, 122, 123, 126, 130, 132, 133, 134, 135, 138, 139, 140, 144, 146, 148, 149, 152, 153, 156, 158, 159, 161, 162, 167, 173, 174, 178, 179 [her last words], 181, 182, 183, 185, 191, 192, 199, 200, 202, 203, 204, 206, 209, 211, 213, 215, 216, 217, 218, 220, 221, 223, 224, 225, 228, 229, 232, 234, 235, 236, 240, 241, 242, 243, 244, 245, 248, 252, 254, 256, 259, 277, 278, 280, 281, 289, 305, 306, 311, 312, 313, 348, 349, 351, 356, 359, 360, 361, 362, 370, 380, 381, 387, 388, 389, 405, 406, 407, 415, 429, 483 (n), 487, 490, 498, 507, 528
 Beatrice, apotheosis of, 225, 233, 405
 Beatrice, Dante's daughter, 361, 363
 Beatrice of Provence, wife of Charles of Anjou, 34, 200
 "Beautiful St. John," 144
 "Beccho" (peak of hood) lengthened, 172
 Beda's brother, 71
 Bede, the Venerable, 52, 58, 183, 392
 Bees, 179, 515
 Belisarius, 30
 Bella, Della, family, 95
 Bella, Gian della, 95, 96
 Bellarmine, Cardinal, 423
 Bellencion Berti, 87, 94, 95
 Bells rung during a thunder-storm, 254
 Belus, 50
 Benacus Lake, 333, 334
 Benedict, St., 127, 128, 129, 185, 186
 Benedict, his rule made "waste paper," 129
 "Benedictus es qui venis," 388
 Benuccio, Senuccio, 314
 Benvenuto da Imola, 44, 86, 129, 416
 Berenger, Raymond, 34
 Berkeley, Bishop, 76
 Bernard, St., 57, 125, 147, 150, 181, 184, 185, 186, 189, 191, 192, 376, 395, 397, 406
 Bernard, his invocation of the B. V. M., 191
 Bernard, his letter to the Canons of Lyons, 183
 Bernard of Quintavalle, 63
 Bernardone, Pietro di, 62, 63
 Berta, Monna, 77

- Berthold of Regensburg, 171
 Bianca Vanna, 297
 Bianchi, the, 87, 94, 95, 100, 299, 302
 Bible, La, 66
 Bice, 201, 226, 227
 Bindo, (Ildebrando), 171
 Bird, metaphor from, 132, 511, 515
 Bird, "Sverna," 166
 Birds on the shore, 106
 Birds, migratory, 269
 Biretta, 144
 Biscay, Bay of, 67
 Blake, Wm., 439
 Blessed, the, see "Souls"
 Blessedness of the angelic spirits, in what it consists, 165
 "Bobolce," 137
 Boccaccio, 86, 91, 95, 129, 142, 326, 337, 365, 415, 416, 428, 434, 524
Boethius, 4, 26, 37, 58, 89, 99, 131, 164, 239, 285, 369, 376, 397
 Bohemia, 112, 113
Bollandists, 124
 Bologna, 57, 69, 205, 326, 328, 331, 334, 335, 338, 519
 Bologna, University of, 139
 Bolsena, Lake of, 49
 Bonacci, Leonardo, 164
 "Bone and Leather," girdled with, 87
 Boniface, Richard, Count of St., 47
 Boniface VIII., Pope, 43, 46, 51, 52, 60, 69, 70, 71, 72, 99, 112, 113, 126, 155, 156, 157, 160, 172, 179, 258, 308, 402, 518, 531
 Bonifazio of Signa, 92
Bonio, 47
 "Books of Sentences" (Gratian's), 57
 Boreas, 164
Borgo Alferri, the, 192
Borgo degli Apostoli, 96
 Bosnia, 114
 Bosone of Gubbio, 412, 413
Bossuet, 57
 Boticchi, 93
 Botticelli, 417, 439
 Bourges, 58
 Bow, 6
 Bow, cross, 8
 Bow, three-stringed, 167
 Boyd, Rev. H., 439

- Boyle, Robt., 431
 Brabant, 59
 Braganza, Count Rainier of, 47
 Branca d'Oria, 368
 Brandan, St., 371, 391
 Branguina, 90
 Bread of angels, 8, 145
 Brennus, 30, 99
 Brenta, the river, 47
 Brescia, 317
 Breviary, the Roman, 137, 146
 Brissos (= Bryson), 76
 Bromios (Bacchus), 339
 Brougham, Lord, 442
 Browne, Sir Thomas, 436
 Browning, R. B., 47, 194, 195, 446
 Browning, E. B., 447
 Bruges, 523
 Brunetto Latini, 12, 29, 41, 57, 77, 90, 345, 353, 366, 367, 372, 531
 Brutus, 32, 50, 362
 Bubwith, N., Bishop of Bath and Wells, 427, 525
 Buggia (city of Algeria), 50
 Bunyan, 77, 259
 Buonagiunta of Lucca, 213, 353, 410
 Buonarrotti, see Michael Angelo
 Buonaventura, St., 56, 62, 66, 70, 71, 73, 150, 395, 398, 399, 401
 Buondelmonte, 92, 96
 Bussano, 47
 Buti, Francesco da, 417
 Butler, A. J., 12, 20, 29, 33, 70, 79, 81, 117, 118, 122, 128, 133, 135, 158, 175, 474
Butler, Bishop, 120
Buzzacarini, Salione, 47
 Byron, Lord, 444
 Byzantium, 116
 Byzantine art, 81, 195
 Cacciaguida, 83, 84, 86, 88, 89, 91, 95, 96, 97, 102, 103, 105
 Cadiz, 158
 Caesar, 2, 31, 62, 376
 Caesar, the German Emperor, 92
 Caesarea, 124, 183, 326
 Cagnano, the river, 48
 Cahors, 366
 Cahorsines, 157
 Cain, 9
 Calabria, 72
Calahorra, 67
 Calaroga, 67
 Calfucci, 94
 Calliope, 1, 106, 357
 Callisto, 180, 518
 Calixtus (Callistus) I., Pope, 157
 Calmet, "De la Salut de Salomon," 57
 Calpurnius, 327
 Camaldoli, monastery of, 128
 Camillus, 30
 Camino, Richard da, 48
 Campaldino, battle of, 204, 205, 206, 211
 Campi, town of, 91
Campbell, T., 124
 Campo Vaccino at Rome, 289
 Canaan, the woman of, 118
 Cancer, zodiacal sign, 147
 Can Grande, 48, 82, 100, 101, 157, 196, 317, 363, 365, 366, 390, 396, 410, 411
 Canti de' Gabrielli, 434
 Canto fermo, 41
 Capaneus, 304
 Capocchio, 434
 Caponsacco, 95
 Cappello, 144
 Capricorn, zodiacal sign, 147, 158
 Caprona, 205, 207
 Cardinal of Acquasparta, 70, 71, 531
 Cardinal del Pogetto, 318, 412
 Cardinal of Ostia, 69
 Cardinals, 52
 Cardinals of Avignon and Rome compared, 125
 Carisenda, The, 519
 "Carole," Neapolitan dance, 138
 Carlotto, 46
 Carlyle, T., 462
 Caro Dominica, 68
 Carrara, 93
 Carthaginians, 31
 Carvajal, the House of, 113
 Cary, Rev. H. F., 440
 Casale, 71
 Casella, 377, 386, 409, 411
 Casentino, the, 94, 128, 216, 218, 245, 410, 519, 520
 Casentino, the Lady of, 216, 248, 250, 253, 256, 270
 Cassino, Monte, 56, 127, 129
 Cassino, monastery of, 127
 Cassius, 32, 362
 Castalian sisterhood, the, 328
 Castalian, the nymphs, 332
 Castile, 67
 Cat, 153, 411, 513
 Catalonians, 43
 Catalonians, greed of, 4
 Catania, Gulf of, 43
 Catellini, 93
 Cathari, The, 478
 Cathay, kingdom of, 66, 112
 Cato, 359, 379, 383, 430
 Catona, 43
 Catria, Monte, 124
 Catullus, 194
 Cavalcanti dei Cavalcanti, 47
 Caviceiuoli, 95
 Cayster, 338
 Cecco d'Ascoli, 253, 287, 319, 413
 Celestine III., Pope, 17
 Celestine V., Pope, 70, 77, 113, 156, 401
Celibacy enforced by Gregory VII., 124
 Centaurs, the, 359, 369
 Central sun, the, 161
 "Centurion, the Great" (St. Peter), 140
 Cephas, 125
 Cerberus, 369, 514
 Cerchi, the, 88, 92, 94, 100, 286
 Cerinthus, 319
 Certaldo, 91
 Certaldo, Jacopo di, 273, 337
 Cesena, 326
 Cesena, dialect of, 353
Chalcidius' translation of Plato, 20
Chambers, G. F., 138
 Chance has no place in Heaven, 187
 Chariot of the sun, 341
 Charity, 151
 Charlemagne, 33, 105
 Charles of Anjou, 34, 56, 200
 Charles the Bald, 371
 Charles the Fat, 371
 Charles Martel, 42, 45, 46, 114
 Charles II. of Naples, 33, 43, 113

- Charles Robert, son of
Charles Martel, 42, 114
Charles, Duke of Calabria,
46
Charles of Valois, 33, 81,
88, 89, 99, 258, 410, 531
Charon, 369, 418
Chartres, 177
Chaucer, 59, 134, 164, 191,
287, 319, 324, 376, 424
seq.
Cherubim, 41, 60, 165
Cherubim and Seraphim,
280
Chess, game of, 48, 164
Chiana, the river, 73
Chiarentana, 47
Chiaromontese, the falsi-
fiers of public weights,
94
Chiascio, 61
Chiassi, 57, 507
Child-life and nature, re-
miniscences of, 5, 126,
136, 160, 176, 187, 194,
515 *seq.*
Childhood, memories of
Dante's, see under
"Dante"
Children's hair, symbol-
ism of, 188
Chiron, 325, 326, 335, 336
Chiusi, 57, 93
Chivalry, true, 206
Chrism, 322
Christ, 51, 64, 67
Christian art, early, 195
Christian Year, the, 80
Chrysostom, St., 57, 71,
398
Church, Dean, 177, 456
Church, the Militant, 146
Ciaccio, 366
Ciaghella della Tosa, 88
Cianguolo, N., 482
Cicero, 4, 20, 57, 130, 131,
239, 286, 397, 490
Cieldauro, Church of, 58
Cimabue, 19, 192, 239, 379
Cincinnatus, 30, 31, 88
Cino da Pistoia, 199, 201,
231, 250, 253, 304, 305,
308, 310, 314, 317, 347,
353, 369, 409, 412
Circle, quadrature of the,
76, 195
Circumcision, 187, 188
Cirrha, al. Cyrrha, 2
Cithern, 115
Cittadella, author, 89
Cittadella, town of, 49
Clairfons, see "Mouton-
net"
Clara, St., 16, 17
Clares, the Poor, 14, 17
Classical imagery, 121
Classical and Scriptural
memories mingled, 62
Clement, St., of Alexan-
dria, 141
Clement, St., of Rome,
183
Clement IV., Pope, 395
Clement V., Pope, 52, 69,
89, 101, 113, 157, 178,
258, 366, 368, 374, 527
Clemenza, wife of Charles
Martel, 42, 46
Clemenza, daughter of
Charles Martel, 46
Cleopatra, 32
Cletus, Bishop of Rome,
157
Clock at Dijon, 59
Clock at Glastonbury, 59,
138, 526
Clock at Magdeburg, 59
Clock at Strasburg, 59
Clock at Verona, 59
Clock at Wells, 59
Clock at Westminster, 59
Clock sent by the Sultan
of Egypt to Frederick
II., 59
Clocks, old, 59, 60, 86, 526
Clockwork, 59, 138
Clusium, 93
Clymene, 97
Clytie, 306
"Coat and cloth" pro-
verb, 190
Coin-makers, false, 112
Colchian fleece, 337
Colchis, 8
Coleridge, S. T., 2, 4, 134,
440
Coliseum at Rome, 187
Cologne, 56, 523
Colonnas, the, 157
"Colpa (La) e sempre
degli offesi," Italian pro-
verb, 99
Column of miniver in the
arms of the Pigli, 94
Columna, Ægidius, 286
Comet of 1301, 81
Comets, the only reference
to, 138
Commandments, the ten,
323
COMMEDIA, THE, see
"Dante"
Communion of saints, 15
Communtation of vows, 23,
25
Compass, the Divine, 110
Compass, the mariner's,
66
Compostella, 144
Comte, Aug., 472
Concentric circles, 162
"Concordia discordan-
tium canonum," 57
Condignity and congruity,
grace of, 118
Conditional immortality,
doctrine of, 39
Conrad I., 88, 89
Conrad II., 89, 91
Conrad III., 89, 91
Consistory, 169
Constantine, 29, 116
Constantinople, 29
Contemplative Orders,
the, 127
Contingencies, 74
Contingent matter, 98
Conversion of the world
without a miracle would
be the greatest miracle
of all, 142
CONVITO, THE, 354, 355,
363, 364, 369, 370, 394
Copernican system, the,
131
"Coram me," 145
Cord of St. Francis, 65
Cord of the Tertiary
Order, 26
Cordeliers, 65
Cornelia, 88
Cornelius' judgment re-
specting Dante's influ-
ence in Italian Art,
417, 419
Cornice Road, The, 521
Corona, 144
Corregieri and Cordeliers,
65
"Corruptio optimi," 129
Corso Donati, 14, 88, 99,
531
Cortigiani, 95
Corydon, 335
Cosmos, 162, 168, 169, 403
Costanza, daughter of
Roger, King of Sicily,
and wife of Henry VI.,
17, 19, 21, 22
"Cota"=thought, 14
Counsels of perfection, 68
"Counts" of the empire
of Heaven, 145, 362
Courtesy, 215
Courtray, 58, 59
Cranes, 511
Crassus, 304
Creation, motive of the
Divine Mind in, 167

- Creed of Dante, 9, 139, 142
 Creed, paraphrase of the, 142
 Creusa, 50
 Cripple, the, of Jerusalem, 113, 117
 Croatia, 183
 Croce, S., church of, at Florence, 63, 64, 386, 434
 Croce, S., del Corvo, the monks of, 345, 374
 Croce, S., Monastery of, 410
 Crossus, 98
Cross, luminous, 81
 Cross of Greek or Byzantine form, 81
 Cross, the Southern, 392
 Cross, the starry, 81, 82
 Crossbow, 167
 "Crown and Mitre," 158
 Crucifixion, darkness at the, 170, 171
 Crusade, the second, 89
 Crusade, the third, its failure predicted, 72
 Crusaders, the souls of, 82
 Crust on wine, 70
 Cunizza, 47, 48, 49, 200, 389
 Cupid, 40, 203
 "*Cur Deus Homo?*" 20, 36, 38, 73
 Curia, the Roman, corruption of, 107, 402
 Curiatii, 30
 Cyclops, 341
 Cyclops, cave of, 338, 339
 "Cyprian, the fair" (= Venus), 40
 Cyprus, 114
 Cyrrha, 2
 Cyrus, 112
Daccisole, Jacopo, 164
 Dedalus, 45
 Damascus, 89
 Damiani, St. Peter, 122, 123, 124, 125, 129, 326
 Damiano, Archdeacon of Ravenna, 124
 Dance, a bridal, 148
 Dance, the vocal and pantomimic, of Italy, 78
 Daniel, the prophet, 18, 173
 Daniel, Arnauld, 261, 309, 355
 DANTE ALIGHIERI—
 Anecdotes of, 153, 411, 513
 Antipathy to France, 114
 DANTE ALIGHIERI—
 Apologia for bitter words, 102
 Apologia for heresy, 139
 Apotheosis of the *COMMEDIA* shadowed forth, 214
 Art studies, 239
 Artistic touches, 14, 215
 Astronomical ideas, 277
 Astronomical knowledge, 131, 268
 Autobiographical touches, 34, 109, 370, 386, 390
 Banishment of, 88
 Beatrice, his first meeting with, after her marriage, 199
 Beatrice, his last lines written to the living, 234
 Buried at Ravenna, 398, 412
 Capella di Dante, 436
 Celibacy, speculations as to his inward purpose respecting, 26
 Childhood and youth, his memories of, 86, 88, 148, 405
 Child nature, pictures of, 5, 126, 136, 187, 194, 515 *seq.*
 Classicism, his, 121, 369
 Clock, a striking, the first writer who mentions, 59
 COMMEDIA, the, date of, 345
 COMMEDIA, the, first germs of, 214, 215, 348 *seq.*
 COMMEDIA, whether "published" in Dante's lifetime, 410
 COMMEDIA, the, *editio princeps* of, 421
 Confession of faith, 381
 Creed, his, 139
 Decree which banished him, date of, 101
 Democratic period of his life, 89
 England visited, 113
 Epistle to Can Grande, 356, 358, 395, 396, 412, 428
 Epistle to the Cardinals, 201, 412
 DANTE ALIGHIERI—
 Epistle to the Florentines, 45
 Epistle to Joannes de Virgilio, 144 *seq.*, 412
 Epistle to the princes and cities of Italy, 375, 412
 Exile foretold, 99
 Greek, his knowledge of, 341, 356
 Hebrew, his elementary knowledge of, 35, 206
 House, his, 91
 Jewels, his fondness for imagery drawn from, 109
 Jews, the, and not Pilate, responsible for Christ's death, 32
 Language, his theory of the origin of, 32
 Latin put by him into Cacciaguida's mouth, 34
 Looks back on his course, 174, 191
 MS. copies of his work, 421
 Missal, his frequent quotations from, 377
 Music, his love of, 41, 377
 Music and optics, his studies in, 41, 61, 115, 120, 313
 Musical instruments, his knowledge of, 99, 115
 Numbers, his strange and mystical reverence for, 356
 Object of each division of his Poem, 415
 Observer of phenomena, a minute, 11, 28
 Observer and traveller, 504
 Omission of his wife, 80
 Paradiso, the, date of, fixed, 101
 Personal appearance described, 415, 416
 Portrait of, in the Duomo of Florence, 418
 Purgatory, his thoughts of, different from those fostered by ecclesiastical tradition, 391
 Scripture made the basis of his arguments for his faith, 143
 Self-analysis in describ-

- DANTE ALIGHIERI—
 ing the poetic temper-
 ament, &c., 27, 202,
 238, 378
 Self-portraiture, 134
 Sight, his weakness of,
 208, 212
 Spots in the moon, his
 theory of the, 9, 394
 Stars, reference to the,
 at the close of each
 portion of his poem,
 407, 408
 Studies in astronomy,
 music, optics, &c., 3,
 13, 41, 115, 120, 161
 Tides, his theory of the,
 93
 Tragedy and comedy,
 his explanation of the
 terms, 356
 University exercises, his
 personal reminiscen-
 ces of, 136
 Universities, probable
 visits to Oxford and
 Paris, 58, 371, 427,
 525
 Unpublished Canzone
 attributed to Dante,
 quoted, 315
 Vulgate, his study of
 the, 377
 Yearning after the
 Wider Hope grows
 stronger towards the
 end of life, 111, 120
 Dante Alighieri, grandson
 of the poet, 422
 Dante de Maiano, 199, 409
 "*Dantis Ossa*," 435
 Danube, the river, 43
 Darkness at the Cruci-
 fixation, 170, 171
 David, 71, 116, 146, 185
 David and Jonathan, 42
 Davus, 327
 Debasing of coin, 112, 114
 Decii, the, 30, 31
 Decretals, 52, 69
 Decretals forged, 52
 Defoe, 318
 Dejanira, 50
 Delectable Mountain, the,
 359, 363, 514
 Delphi, 2
 Delphic deity, the, 2
 Delphic oracle, 98
 Demophoon, 50
 Denis, St., Abbey of, 184
 Denmark, 114
 Derby, Edward Geoffrey,
 fourteenth Earl of, 326
 Descent into Hades, the,
 51, 154, 319
 Design, the argument
 from, 143
 Dialects of Italy, 352, 353
 Diana (the moon), 133
 Dido, 40, 50, 248, 249
 Dijon, 59
 Diké, 298
 "Diligite justitiam," &c.,
 106
 Dina Perini, 330, 331
 Dino Compagni, 273, 303,
 415
 Dione, 40, 131
 Dionysius Agricola, of
 Portugal, 114
 Dionysius Areopagita, 12,
 49, 52, 57, 150, 163,
 165, 166, 397, 403
 Dis, the city of, 369
 Dittamondo, the, of
 Fazio degli Uberti, see
 "Fazio."
 "Divina," when first at-
 tached to the poem, 357
 Divination practised by
 Italian peasants, 107
 Divine light, how im-
 parted to other natures,
 74
 Doctor Angelicus, 56
 Doctor Irrefragabilis, 398
 Doctor Seraphicus, 71, 399
 Doctor Universalis, 56
 Doctorate, ceremony of
 admission to the, 143,
 144
 Dogs, 514
 "*Dogs of doubt*," 22
 Dolcino, Fra, 478
 "Dolcissima Morte," 349
 Dolorous Vale, the, 103
 Dolphin, 327, 511
 Dominations, 166
 Dominic, St., 56, 60, 64,
 66, 67, 68, 69, 76, 398
 Dominicans, 56, 65, 139
 Dominicans and Francis-
 cans, 65, 169, 345
 "*Domini canes*," 68
 Dominicus, 68
 Domitian, 57
 "Donat," a lesson-book,
 71
 Donati, the, 74
 Donati, Corso and Forese,
 14, 17, 26
 Donati, Ubertino, 95
 Donation of Constantine,
 the, 116
 Donatus, the grammar-
 ian, 71
 Donna, 256
 Donna gentile, 216, 218,
 259, 266, 271, 349, 359,
 363 and note, 370, 405,
 487
 Donne of Florence, 211,
 213
 Donzella, 213
 Dorner, Dr. J. A., 37
 Dove, the, 144
 Doxology, the, 79, 155
 Dreams, 193, 199, 224
 Drelincourt, 318
 Drepanum, 113
 Drithelm, vision of, 371
 Drokensford, Bishop, regi-
 sters of, 157
 Ductor Dubitantium, 73
 Dumb ox of Sicily, the, 56
 Duomo of Florence, the,
 135
 Durazzo, siege of, 31
 DVX, 157, 362
 Eagle in the arms of the
 Scaligeri, 100
 Eagle, head and wings of
 the imperial, 107, 151
 Early art in the West, 195
 Early Italian and Proven-
 çal poets, 309, 355
 Early marriages, 87
 Easter Day, A.D. 1300,
 121, 152, 350
 Ebion, 319
 Ebro, the river, 50, 67
 Echo, 65
 Eclipse at the Crucifixion,
 170
 Eclipse, a partial, 148
 Eden, 153
 Edom, 188
 Edward I. of England,
 113, 376 n.
 Edward II. of England,
 113, 376
 Egypt, 146
 El, Eli, Elion, Elios, 81,
 154, 351
 Eleanor of Provence, 34
 Eleatic School of Greek
 philosophers, 76
 Elect, number of the, 120,
 148, 173
 Election, 120, 168
 Electra, 88
 Elisei, 88, 89, 91
 Elissa (Dido), 328
 Elysian day, 84
 Elysian fields, 83, 84, 346,
 369
 Enna, the river, 96
 Emmerich of Narbonne,
 105

- "Emperor," applied to God, 67, 142, 145, 258, 277, 362, 363
- "Empress," applied to the B. V. M., 119, 189; (see also "Augusta")
- Empyrean, the, 1, 6, 8, 11, 19, 26, 128, 130, 135, 136, 142, 158, 159, 161, 162, 163, 173, 175, 177, 178, 182, 184, 203, 244, 259, 350, 403, 406
- England, 58
- Englishmen, 113
- Enoch and Elijah, 149
- Enzo, King of Sardinia, 308
- Eöus, 337
- Epaphus, 97
- Epicureanism, 200
- Epicurus, 430
- Epicycle or episphere, 40
- Episcopate, peculiar defenders of the, 95
- Equinox, 3
- Era, the river, 31
- Eric, King of Norway, 114
- Eridanus, 329
- Eriphyle, 22
- Eros, 346
- Esau and Jacob, 45, 188
- Eschenbach, Wolfram von*, 501
- Essence, the Divine, 194, 195
- "Et coram Patre," 62
- Ethiopia, 268
- Euclid*, 76
- Eudoxia, the Empress, 71
- Eunoe, 48, 306, 406, 407
- Europa, 158
- Europe, 67, 269
- Europe, the languages of, 352
- Eurus, the wind, 43, 333
- Eurytus*, King of Thrace, 50
- Eusebius Pamphili, 124, 154, 183, 326
- Eutyches, 319
- Eutychian dogma*, 29
- Eve, 73, 185
- Evelyn, John, 431
- "Everlasting gospel, the," 70, 72, 401
- Ezekiel, the prophet, 169, 258, 414
- Ezzelin da Romano, 47, 48
- Fabii, the, 31
- Fabius, Max., Cunctator, 31
- Faenza, 93
- Faerie Queen*, the, 358, 428
- Faggiuola, see "Uguccione"
- Faith, Dante's explanation of, 140
- Faith, the ground of, 143
- Faith and hope, 140
- Faith, explicit and implicit, 119
- Faith, the source of, 142
- Faith is the source of virtue, 141
- Falcon, the, 105, 110, 510
- Famagosta, 114
- Fame, the love of, 28
- Fantinelli, M. de', 413, 494
- Farinata*, 90, 201, 366
- Farrar, Dr. F. W., 360, 366
- Fauns, 334
- Fauriel, 470, 472, 473
- "Faust," 483, 494
- Fazio degli Uberti, 201, 248, 298, 318, 527
- Felix Guzman, 68
- Feltro, 48
- Ferdinand IV. of Castile, 113
- Feringhi, 95
- Ferrara, 89
- Ferrara, the Podestà of, 48
- Ficino, Marsilio, 370
- Fiducio de' Milotti, of Certaldo, 337
- Fiesole, 31, 88, 92, 95
- Fifanti, 94
- Figghine, 91
- Filippi, 93
- Filippo Argenti, 95, 367
- Finite, limitations of the, 110
- Fire, the law of, 133
- Fire, mediæval notion of its gravitation, 6
- Fish, gold and silver, 27
- "Fisherman, the," 108
- Fisherman's seal, the, 157
- Fishpond, 27
- Fixed stars, 133
- Flaxman, 439
- Fleece, the golden, 194
- Fleurs-de-lys, 33, 52, 107
- Flora, Cistercian monastery of, 71
- Florence, city of, 52, 57, 69, 71, 86, 87, 92, 93, 94, 96, 99, 100, 171, 180 [the last allusion to it in the *Commedia*], 201, 205, 211, 212, 227, 235, 243, 247, 286, 301, 302, 303, 314, 317, 352, 365, 375, 434, 490, 517
- Florence, clock of the Benedictine abbey at, 86
- Florence, commerce of, with Cyprus, 114
- Florence, dialect of, 91
- Florence, the evils of, traced to the vices of the clergy, 92
- Florence, French fashions introduced into, 172
- Florence in bygone days, 87
- Florence in the twelfth century, 90, 91
- Florence, the ladies of, 56, 86
- Florence, ode in praise of, 301
- Florence, parish of St. Martin at, 86
- Florence, the walls of, 86, 87
- Florentine Academy, the, 13
- Florentine coins, 108
- Florentine dress in early times, 87
- Florentine families, decay of, 405
- Florentine fashions condemned, 86
- Florentine home-life, 87
- Florentine league, 101
- Florentine people, 88, 92
- Florentine standard, 96
- Florina, 52
- Florins of gold coined by Pope John XXII., 108
- Folco of Marseilles, 48, 49, 50
- Folco de' Portinari, 182, 221, 226, 359
- Foligno, 61
- Font in the Church of St. John at Florence, 88, 144
- Fonte Avellana, monastery of, 124, 125, 354
- Foraboschi, 93
- Forese Donati, 14
- Forged Decretals, 52
- Foscolo, Ugo, 365, 432
- Fox, C. J., 326 n.
- France, 88, 317 n.
- Francesca da Rimini, 90, 367, 413
- Franceschi, 31
- Franceschino, the Marquis, 317
- Franciai*, 124
- Francis, St., of Assisi, 14, 17, 60, 61, 62, 63, 64, 66, 68, 70, 129, 185, 186, 306, 318, 382, 383, 398, 520
- Franciscans, 73, 318, 400

- Franciscans, founding of the Order, 63
Franciscans, the stricter were Ghibellines, 72
Frangipani, 91
Fraticelli, the, 70, 72, 402, 478
Fratres Minores, 68
Frederick Barbarossa, 59, 113, 283, 287, 347, 353, 510
Frederic II., King of Sicily, son of Peter of Aragon, 113, 117
Free-will and the Divine foreknowledge, 98
Free-will and Force as factors in broken vows, 18
French cathedrals, 372
French envoys to Rome, 113
French fashions in Florence, 172
Frescobaldi, 286
Frogs, 511
Froissart, 59
Furies, the, 369
Gabriel, the Archangel, 19, 52, 79, 135, 189, 407
Gades, 158, 328
Gaeta, 43
Galatea, 341
Galaxy, 81
Galen, 69
Galicia, 144
Galigaio, 94
Galileo, 8, 9, 10, 40, 430
Gallantry, true and false, 290
Galli family, 94
Gallia, Cisalpine and Transalpine, 31
Galuzzo, 92
Ganges, the river, 61, 62, 392
Garda, the Lago di, 247 n. 333 n., 520, 522
Gargalandi, 95
Garieliano, the river (see "Verde"), 43
Garlic, 334, 335
Gascon, the (Clement V.), 101, 157
Gaston of Dauphine, 172
Gauls, capture of Rome by the, 30
Gemini, zodiacal sign, 130, 132, 158, 159
Gemma Donati, 240, 245, 334
Genoa, 114, 134, 392
Genoese, 50
Gentucca, 248, 256, 270
Geometer, 195
George III., King, 368
Gerbert (Pope Sylvester II.), 59, 164
German banks of the Danube, 43
Germans, 180
Germany, 58, 94
Gervase of Tilbury, 183
Geryon, 359, 383
Gherardo the Good, 48
Ghibellines, 33, 88, 93, 94, 96, 157, 276, 298, 338
Ghibellinism, 97, 360
Gian della Bella, 95
Giandonati, 95
Gianni, Lapo, 201, 353
Gibraltar, 113
Gibraltar, Straits of, 392
Gideon, 7
Gihon, 299
Giordano, 56
Giotto, 19, 60, 62, 64, 192, 239, 260, 282, 345, 379, 390, 410, 417, 529, 530, 531
Giovanna, mother of St. Dominic, 68
Giovanni, 68
Giuda, 95
Giucchi, 94
Gladstone, W. E., 326 n., 459
Glass, stained, 118
Glastonbury, 59, 138, 527, 528
Glaucos, 4
"Gloria in excelsis," 387
"Gloria Patri," 75, 155
Glow-worm, the, 506
Godfrey of Boulogne, 105
Goethe, 7, 482, 494, 500
Gold and silver fish, 27
Gulden age, the, 122
Golden fleece, the expedition in search of, 194
Golden florins, 108
Golden legend, the, 119
Gonzaga, Cardinal, 435
Good and bad wine, proverb respecting, 70
Gospel, the, of the Infancy, 189
Gospel of Nicodemus, 51
Gospels "cast away," 52
Gould, S. B., 9
Gower, 427
Grace of condignity, 118, 169
Grace of congruity, 118, 169
Gracchi, the, 88
"*Grammar, the, of Assent*," 140, 141
Grand Master of the Templars, the, 113
"Gran rifiuto," 113, 402
Grangier, the abbé, 467
Gratian, 57
Greci, Borgo de', at Florence, 93
Greek, Constantine's change to become a, 116
Greek chorus, 261
Greek, Dante coins a word from, 341
Gregory the Great, Pope, 51, 52, 98, 116, 165, 371
Gregory VI., Pope, 124
Gregory VII., Pope, 105, 124
Gregory IX., Pope, 52
Gregory XII., Pope, 161
Gregory Nazianzen, S., 15
Greyhound, the, 96, 101, 366, 396
Grieve, the valley of the, 92
Grimthorpe, Lord, 59
Grossetête, Robert, Bishop of Lincoln, 164, 400
Gryphon, symbolism of the, 30, 389
Guadaldra, 87, 94
Gualdo, 61
Gualterotti, 96
Gubbio, 61, 124, 394
Guelphic cause, the, 52
Guelphs, 33, 47, 87, 93, 94, 97, 366
Guelphs and Ghibellines, 30, 32, 33, 93, 157, 362
Guidi Conti, 92, 94
Guido Cavalcanti, 42, 47, 199, 200, 226, 237, 273, 308, 326, 347, 353, 379, 409, 415
Guido Contè, 94
Guido Ghislieri, 353
Guido Guinicelli, 66, 200, 219, 286, 346, 353, 379
Guido Novello, 144, 164
Guido Pisano, 414
Guido da Polenta, 341 n., 363 n., 412, 532
Guido Ravignani, 94
Guidoncinio dei Sinibaldi, 204
Guinevere, Queen, 90, 447, 527
Guiscard, Robert, 17, 105
Guittone d'Arezzo, 288, 353
Guizzant, 524

- Gunthorpe, John, Dean of Wells, 428
 Guy de Montfort, 524
Guyot de Provins, 66
Gwynne, Nell, 47
 Hades, our Lord's descent into, 51, 154, 319
 Hakon the long-legged, 114
 Hales, Alexander, 398
 Hall, Robert, 442
 Hallam, Robert, Bishop of Salisbury, 427
 Hallam, Sir H., 442
 Halo round the moon, 55, 162
 Halys, the river, 98
 Hannibal, 31
 Happier days, sorrow in remembering, 205
 Hapsburg, the House of, 42
 Harlots who enter the kingdom of Heaven, 51
 Hasty judgments, 76, 77
 Hayley, 437, 438
 Heathen, hopes of the, 111
 Heathen, the salvation of, 120
 Heber, the children of, 154
 Hebrew heroes and heroines, 186
 Hebrew language, whether spoken by Adam, 154
 Hebrew, the primeval language, 352
 Hebrews, the, 25
 Hector, 32
 Helice, 180, 518
 Helicon, 3
 Helios, 327
 Hell, signs of sorrow in, 49
 Henry I. of Navarre, 114
 Henry II. of Lusignan, King of Cyprus, 114
 Henry IV., Emperor, 105
 Henry VI. (son of Frederick Barbarossa), 17
 Henry VII. of Luxemburg, 2, 33, 46, 48, 51, 52, 92, 100, 101, 146, 160, 178, 180, 186, 187, 258, 287, 299, 301, 303, 314, 315, 316, 317, 328, 366, 374, 375, 376, 394, 395, 412
 Henry VII., words found on his monument, 126
 Henry of Susa (Cardinal of Ostia), 69
Hera/dry, 67
 Hercules, 50, 328
Heredity, doctrine of, 44, 45
 Heresy in the thirteenth century, 67
Herodotus, 98, 102
 Heroldt, 480
Herrick, 209
Herschel, Sir John, 138
Hesiod, 40
 Hesperus, 40
 Hettinger, Dr., 404, 473, 488, 493
 Hezekiah, 116
 Hierarchy of Heaven, the nine orders of the, 161, 165
 Hippocrates, 60, 69
 Hippolytus, 99
 Hoffinger, Josefa von, 491
 Holocaust, 81
 Homer, 40, 133, 134, 371, 418, 494
 Homonyms, use of, 261
 Honey, 334, 335
 Honorius III., Pope, 63, 69, 172
 Hooker, Richard, 5, 6, 22, 44, 53, 74, 351, 385
 Hope, 145, 146, 147
 Hope of the blessed, 147
 Horace, 102, 147, 154, 164, 241, 327, 357, 397, 490
 Horatii and Curiatii, 30
 Horses of the chariot of the sun, 341
 Hosanna, 35, 41, 165, 166, 190, 349
 Hugh, Marquis of Brandenburg, 95
Hugh de Sade, 200
 Hugo de St. Victore, 15, 36, 37, 57, 58, 71, 161, 376, 395, 398
 Human birth, the mysteries of, 73
 Human redemption, Divine scheme of, 37
 Humboldt, 138, 485
 Humphrey, Duke of Gloucester, 427
 Hunt, Leigh, 7, 367, 441
Hymns Ancient and Modern, 137
 Hymns hushed in the seventh sphere of Paradise, 123
 Hyperion, 131
 Hyrcanian tigers, 338
 "I AM," 167
Icarus, myth of, 10
 "Idea," in the Platonic sense, 161
 Idealist, 42
 Ilarian letter, the, 113, 351, 366, 374, 410
 Illuminato of Rieti, 71
 Immaculate conception of the B. V. M., feast of the, 183
 Immanuel of Rome, 26, 35, 68, 154, 372, 410, 412
Immortality, conditional, doctrine of, 39
 Inola, see Benvenuto
 "Imparadise," 161
 "Imperator," applied to God (see also "Emperor"), 362
 Imperia, Dante's daughter, 361
 "Imperium et libertas," 362
 Importuni family, 96
 Incarnation, mystery of the, 9, 36, 37, 73, 133, 191
 India, 170
 Indulgences, 172, 519
 Indus, the river, 111
 "Inebriate," 155, 176
 "In exitu Israel," 129, 386
 Infangati family, 95
 Infants, conditions of their salvation, 188
 Innocent III., Pope, 52, 63, 69, 172, 177
 Inspiration, mediæval theory of, 168
 "In Te, Domine, speravi," 380
 Interdicts and excommunications, 108
 "Io Bacche," 73
 Iolus, 335, 336
 Iole, 50
 Iphigenia, 26
 Iris, 65, 162
Irony of history, the, 201, 328
 Isaac, the two sons of, 188
 Isaiah, 147, 365
 Isar, the river, 31
 Isariot, see "Judas"
 Isidore Hispalensis, 51, 58
 Ister, the river, 328
 "Italian land, the," 47
 Italian land, its depressed condition, 47
 Italian winter, 270
 Italy, 58, 64, 124
 Italy, dialects of, 352, 353
 Italy, the miseries of, 362
 Jacob, 45, 128, 188, 306
 Ivy, creeping, 335

- Jacob, the ladder in his vision, 122, 128, 133
 Jacopo, see "Lentino"
 James I. of Aragon, 113
 James II., 114
 James, King of the Bale-
 aric Isles, 113
 James, St., the Greater,
 144, 146, 148, 155
 James, St., of Compos-
 tella, 34, 81, 144
 James, St., the Less, 146
 January passing into
 spring, 160
 Janus, the temple of, 31,
 32
 Jarrow, Bede of, 58
 Jason, 8
 Jeanne, daughter of Henry
 I. of Navarre, 114
 Jehoshaphat, the valley
 of, 132
 Jephtha, 26
 Jeremiah, the prophet,
 365, 376
 Jerome, St., 15, 35, 71,
 168, 171
 Jerusalem, 144, 146
 Jerusalem, King of, title
 assumed by the House
 of Anjou, 113
 Jerusalem, the meridian
 of, 132
 Jesuits depreciated Dante,
 423
 Jewels, images from, 86,
 109, 176
 Jews, the, 26, 36
 Joachim, the Abbot, 17, 70,
 71, 398, 399, 400, 401,
 478
 Joanna, mother of St.
 Dominic, 68
 Joannes, Jochanan, 68
 Joannes de Virgilio, 144,
 326, 350, 365
 John, St., the Baptist, 108,
 185, 186
 John, St., the Baptist,
 coins stamped with the
 image of, 108
 John, St., the Baptist, his
 church at Florence, 88,
 386
 John, St., the Baptist,
 festival of, 91
 John, St., the Divine, 19,
 142, 147, 148, 149, 155,
 169, 189
 John, St., the sheepfold of,
 90
 John, St., Lateran, 180
 John XXI., Pope, 71
 John XXII., Pope, 52,
 70, 89, 155, 157, 160, 318,
 366, 412, 423, 436, 531
 John of Parma, 400, 401, 402
 John, King of Saxony, 489
 John, brother of Charles
 Martel, 43
 John of Gaunt, 88
 Jordan, the river, 129, 389
 Joshua, 51, 104
 Jove's bolts, 328
 "Jovial," 40
 Juba, 32
 Jubilee, the, of A.D. 1300,
 90, 172, 180, 181, 183,
 243, 244, 363, 518
 Judaea, 170
 Judas Iscariot, 362
 Judas Maccabæus, 104
 Judith, 185
 Jugurtha, 33, 304
 Julian Calendar, the, 161
 Julien le Pauvre, St.,
 church of, at Paris, 58
 Julius Cæsar, 90
 Juno, 65, 66, 162
 Jupiter, the planet, 105,
 107, 131, 156, 259
 Jupiter, heathen deity, 121
 "Juste judicate," 106
 Justinian, 29, 33, 35, 302,
 362
 Justinian, his Codex, Pan-
 ducts, and Novellæ, 29
 Juvenal, 87, 219, 286, 294
 Keble, 6, 80, 453, 515
 Ken, Bishop, 79, 227, 403,
 494, 512
 Keys, the, on the Papal
 banner, 26, 36
 Klackzo, M., 479
 Knight, a true, 206
 Koran, the, 372
 Kubla Khan, Coleridge's,
 134
 Labarum, 184
 "Labia mea, Domine," 387
 Labitte, C., 476
 Lacaita, Sir James, 416
 Lacordaire, 470, 473
 Lactantius, 57
 Ladder, Jacob's, 122, 128
 Ladder of the Scaligeri,
 100, 122
 Lady-Chapels of the
 twelfth, thirteenth, and
 fourteenth centuries, 183
 Lægia, 201
 Lago di Garda, 247 n., 333,
 520, 522
 Lamartine, 474
 Lamberti, arms of the
 family, 94
 Lamennais, Abbé de, 470,
 472
 Lancelot, 90, 447
 Land, the Holy, 51
 Landor, W. S., 7, 228, 367,
 441
 Language, Dante's theory
 of, 154, 352
 Laon, Cathedral of, 177
 Lapo (for Jacopo), 171
 Lapo Gianni, 200, 201, 353,
 409
 Lapo degli Uberti, 201
 Lapo Salterello, 88, 100,
 171
 Lark, the, 117
 Lars Porsena, 93
 Lateran Church of St.
 John, 180, 375
 Lateran palace, 180
 Latin put by Dante into
 Cacciaguida's mouth, 84
 Latin Fathers adverse to
 the salvation of Solo-
 mon, 57
 Latin used for Italian, 72,
 98 (Canto, xii. 144, and
 xvii. 35 of the original)
 Latini, see "Brunetto"
 Latitudinarianism, 170
 Latona, 167
 Latona, the daughter of,
 55, 131
 Laura (Petrarch's), 200
 Laurence, St., 21
 Lavinia, 29
 Law of fire, according to
 mediæval physics, 133
 Law, the reign of, supreme
 in Heaven, 187
 Leah, 306
 Leda, 159
 Legend, the golden, 119,
 403
 Legend of the monk and
 the bird, 403
 Legends, Arthurian, 352,
 526
 Legends, classical, 346
 Lentino, Jacopo da, 310,
 347
 Leo, constellation of, 91,
 121
 Leo the Great, Pope, 63
 Leo X., Pope, 436
 "Leonine City," the, 180
 Lethe, 48, 51, 306, 327,
 369, 389, 406, 407
 "Liberty, Equality, Fra-
 ternity," 101
 "Liber Aureus," the, of
 Venice, 114
 Libra, zodiacal sign, 167

- Libyan serpent, 338
 Lightfoot, Peter, monk of
 Glastonbury, 59, 138
 Liguria, 317 *n.*
 Ligurian Mountains, 328
 Lilies, the golden, of
 Florence, 33, 328
 Lilies, the saints compared
 to, 135
 Lilies, the white, 96
 Limbus infantum, 188
 Limbus patrum, 51, 154,
 186
 Limitations of man's
 knowledge, 120
 Linus, Bishop of Rome,
 157
Livy, 30, 57, 88, 93, 99
 Lizard, the, 515
Logbatters. *Magnus*,
 King of Norway, 114
 "Lombard, the Great," 100
 Lombard, Peter, 140, 146
 Lombardi, 423
 Lombard tooth, the, 33
 Lombards, the Arian, 105
 Lombardy, 317 *n.*
 Lombardy, dialects of, 353
 Longfellow, 496
 Longinus, 441
 Louis of Bavaria, 160
 Louis VII., 89
 Louis IX., 34
 Louis X., 46
 Louis, King of Hungary,
 46
 Louis Hutin, 114
 Love, the might of, 16,
 150, 159
 Lowell, J. R., 494
 Lubbock, Sir John, 512
 Lucan, 2, 31, 50, 57, 62,
 169, 261, 326, 350, 490
 Lucia, St., 82, 158, 189,
 190, 191, 359, 384, 414
 Lucia, St., Church of, 199,
 201
 Lucifer, 40, 110, 156, 169
 Lucretia, 30, 88
Lucretius, 5, 7, 26, 402
 Luminous cross at Flor-
 ence, 81
 Lunar halo, 55, 162
 Lunar, theory of the tides,
 93
 Luni, Bishop of, 317, 410
 Luni, city of, 93
 Lunigiana, the, 93, 317, 410
 Lusignan, lion on the
 shield of, 114
Luther, M., 172, 299
LXX., 154
 Lycean Hills, 334
 Lydgate, 427
Lyons, Council of, 56
 Lyra Innocentium, 516
 Macarius, St., 128
 Macaulay, Lord, 443
 Machiavelli, 422 *n.*, 491
 Macra, see "Magra"
 Madonna, usage of the
 term, 200, 210, 243
 Mænalus, 330, 333
 Magdalen, the, 51
Magdeburg, 59
Magister Sententiarum, 57
 "Magna charta pauper-
 tatis," 63
 Magnetic needle, the, 66
 Magnus Logbatters, of
 Norway, 114
 Magra, the river, 50, 93
Mahabharata, the, 372
 Mahomet, 304
 Mahometan law, 89
 Maia, 131
 Majorca, 114
 "Malahoth" and "Mam-
 lachoth," 35
 Malaspini, the, 93 (see also
 "Morcello")
 Malebolge, the demon
 scenes of the, 375
 Malta, prison of, 48, 49
 Manfred, 113, 353
 Manfredi, Alberigo de',
 368
 Mangiador, see "Peter"
 Manichæans, 478
 Manlius, T. Torquatus,
 30, 31
 "Manibus date lilia
 plenis," 3, 88
 Manna in the wilderness,
 8
 Manna, the true, 69
 Maunng, Cardinal, 228,
 404, 455, 479, 488
 Mantua, 333
 Manzoni, 434
 Marca Trevigiana, 47, 48
Marco Polo, 62, 66, 112,
 404
Marcus Antonius, 32
 Margaret of Provence,
 wife of Louis IX., 34
 "Maria," 158
 Maria, S., del Fiore, 135
 Mariner's compass, 66
 Maro (Virgil), 329
 Marredi, Fra Tommaso,
 436
 Marriage, 322
 Marriage feast, 211
 Marriage settlements, 87
 Marriages, early, 87
 Mars, heathen deity, 45,
 329
 Mars, the planet, 80, 81,
 82, 100, 105, 131, 156,
 259
 Mars, statue of, 91, 96, 414
 Marseilles, 48, 50, 392
 Marsyas, 2
 Martin, St., Church of, at
 Florence, 91
 Martin, Ser, 71
Martin, Sir Theodore, 240
Mary of Hungary, mother
 of Charles Martel, 46
Mary Beatrice of Modena,
 17
 Mary, the Blessed Virgin,
 19, 62, 75, 79, 88, 136,
 137, 149, 182, 185, 188,
 189, 190, 191, 192, 349,
 407
 Mary, St., cultus of, 183,
 191
*Mary, St., representation
 of, in mediæval art*, 136
 Mater dolorosa, 62
 Matilda, 3, 202, 203, 204,
 306, 348, 387, 507
 Matilda, Abbess of Hacke-
 born, 372
 Matilda of Helfta, 372
 Matteo, Cardinal d'Acqua-
 sparta, 70, 71
Matthew Paris, 183
 Maurice, F., 450
 Maximus, Cunctator, F.,
 31
*Maynard, Lady Mar-
 garet*, 227
 Mazzini, 433
 Mediæval thought, 22
 Medici family, 418, 422
 Mediterranean, 50, 392
 Meinhard, J. N., 482
 Melchizedek, 45
 Melibœus, 330, 331, 334,
 335, 336, 338
 Meliasus, 76
 Memory, whether pos-
 sessed by angels, 170
 Mendicant Orders, the,
 60, 68, 397, 400
 Mercato Vecchio of Flo-
 rence, 91, 95
 "Mercurial," 40
 Mercury, 8, 33, 131, 260
 Mercury, heaven of, 27
 Mercury, house of, 230
 Mercury, sphere of, 40
 Mercury, statue of, 40
 Merits through which
 children are saved, 187
 Michael the Archangel, 19

- Midas, King, 339
 Milan, 124
 Military imagery, 207
 Milky Way, the, 81
 Milman, Dean, 69, 70, 72,
 108, 124, 125, 181, 451
 Milotti, see "Fiducio"
 Milton, 7, 8, 9, 10, 28, 31,
 40, 98, 110, 131, 161,
 169, 171, 348, 367, 384,
 385, 386, 430, 439, 441,
 443, 447, 500
 Mincio, the river, 333
 Minerva, 7
 Minos, 369, 418
 Minos daughter, 72
 "*Miracula non sunt mul-*
tiplicanda," &c., 170
 "Miserere," 185, 387
Nissal, the Sarum, 155
 Modena, 17, 32
Molière, 12
 Molossian bounds, 328
 Mona Bice, 201, 226, 227
 MONARCHIA, DE, 360, 361,
 362, 364, 402
 "Money-changers," 141
 Monk and the bird, legend
 of, 403
Monophysite dogma, 29
Montaigne and his cat,
 153
 Montalembert, 470
Montaperti, battle of, 93,
 94
 Montebuono, castle of,
 92, 96
Monte Cattini, battle of,
 46
 Montefiascone, 49
 Montemalo, 87
 Montemurlo, 92
 Monti, Vinc., 432
 Moon, Dante's theory of
 the spots in the, 9
 Moors, the, 113, 114
 Mopsus, 327, 329, 330, 331,
 332, 334, 335, 336, 338,
 339, 340, 346
Morbus Sacer, 172
 Moroello di Malaspina,
 245, 248, 317, 363, 365,
 374, 410
 Moronto, brother of Cac-
 ciagnida, 89
 Mosca (degli Uberti o
 Lamberti), 94
 Moses, 19, 89, 121, 151,
 189, 190, 404
 Moses, Psalms, and Pro-
 phets, 143
 Mountain, the Delectable,
 359, 363
 Mountain of Purification,
 369, 379, 382, 383, 392,
 418, 506, 509, 513
 Moutonnat de Clairfons,
 468
 Mucchio or Mugnon de'
 Fantinelli, 413
 Mucius Scævola, 21
 Müller, Prof. F. M., 154
 "Mundus est patria," 352
 Musatto, 326 n, 336 n.
 Muses, the, 2, 17, 65, 104,
 134, 326, 339, 340
 Mushrooms, 334
 Music, Dante's knowledge
 of, 120
 Music of the cithern, 115
 Music of the organ, 99
 Music, Platonic and Pytha-
 gorean ideas of, 4
 Music of the spheres, 4
 Muso, 336
 Mysteries and miracle-
 plays, 373
 Nabuchodonosor, 18
 Naiad, 341
 Naples, 42, 56, 114, 127,
 339
 Narcissus, 14
 Nathan the seer, 71, 381,
 398
Natura naturans, 194
Natura naturata, 194
 Navarre, Jeanne of, 114
 Navarre, kingdom of, 114
 "Navicella," Giotto's, 64
 "Navicella," applied to a
 poem, 7
 Nazareth, 52
 Neale, J. M., 137, 148,
 176
 "Necesse," 75
 Needle of the mariner's
 compass, 66, 347, 348
 Nemesis, 298
Nepotism, 129
 Neptune, 194, 329
 Nereids, 194
 Nereus, 338
 Neri, the, 88, 92, 258, 276,
 299
 Nerli family, 87, 95
 Nestorius, 319
 Newman, J. H., 140, 363,
 366, 367, 385, 393, 453
Newton, Sir Isaac, 166
Niccola de' Cerchi, 99
Nicene and Athanasian
Creeds, the, 53, 195
 Nicholas I., Pope, 52
 Nicholas III., Pope, 51,
 124, 179, 366
 Nicholas IV., Pope, 435
 Nicodemus, the apocry-
 phal Gospel of, 51, 369
 Nicosia, 114
 Nile, the river, 31, 298,
 299
 Nimrod, 154
 Noah, 66
 Nobility, true, 89, 283,
 285, 286, 405
 "Noblesse oblige," 89, 90
 Nocera, 61
Nogaret, William de, 60
 "*Nomina sunt consequen-*
tia rerum," 210
 Normandy, 58
 Norway, 114
 "Norwegian, the," 114
 "Nos quoque laxas," 82
Novara, 57
 Novello, Alessandro, 48
 Novello, Guido, 144, 164
 Numbers, Dante's rever-
 ence for their mystical
 signification, 356
 Nymphs, 340, 341
 Nysa, 333, 335
 Ocean, the great, 50
 Ochino, Bern., 423 n.
 Oderisi of Gubbio, 379
 Oliphant, Mrs., 466 n.
 Olympus, 169
 Umberto of Santafior, 379
 "One baptism for the re-
 mission of sins," 26
 Orcagna's "Last Judg-
 ment," &c., 57, 417
 Orders of the heavenly
 hierarchy, 161, 165
 Organ, 99, 377
 "Orient," (i.e., Assisi), 62
 Oriflamme, the heavenly,
 184
Origen, unwritten saying
of our Lord recorded by,
 141
 Orlando (Rolando), 105
 Ormanni family, 93
 Orosius, Paulus, 57, 58
Orta, frescoes at, 64
 Orvieto, 59, 73, 375, 418
 "O salve sacra facies," 183
 "O sanguis meus," 84
 Ostia, 124
 Ostian, the, 69
 "Other-worldliness," 345
 Otho III., Emperor, 95
 Ovid, 2, 4, 8, 14, 22, 43,
 50, 57, 65, 72, 81, 83,
 87, 97, 98, 99, 121, 122,
 131, 134, 162, 169, 180,
 241, 261, 286, 299, 306,
 326, 330, 337, 339, 341,
 350, 490

- Oxenham, H. N., 37
Oxford, 58, 59
Oxford, responsions at, 139
Oxford, University of, 139
Ozanam, A. F., 15, 59,
364, 372, 400, 459 *n.*,
470, 473, 477, 479, 488,
494
P's, the seven, 385
Pachynus, 43, 340
Pacificus, Archdeacon of
Verona, 59, 138
Pactolus, 339, 340
Padua, 47, 48, 326, 336,
390, 410
Pæan, 73
Palazzo del Popolo, the,
at Florence, 93
Palermo, 43
Palestine, 51, 170
Paley, Archdeacon, 143
Pallas, son of Evander, 30
Palma of Browning's
"Sordello," 47
Palm branch brought by
the angel to the B. V.
M., 189
"Palm" and "Pardon"
churchyard at Wells,
528 *n.*
Pamphilus, 124
Pancrazio, St., 91
Panceus (Cæsarea Philippi),
183
Pantaleoni, House of, 36
n.
Pantheism, 19, 76
Panther, the (symbol of
animal perfection), 353
Paradise, 51, 56, 57, 58,
60, 84, 89, 134, 135, 175,
181, 183, 186, 402
Paradise, age of the spirits
in, 187
Paradise and Babylon, 137
Paradise, Beatrice not to
be Dante's only P., 104
Paradise, the bliss of, 79
Paradise is everywhere in
Heaven, 16
Paradise, joy of the souls
in, 78
Paradise, sign of joy in,
49, 281
Paradise is as the tree of
life, 104
Paradise, the earthly, 3,
36, 38, 84, 138, 153
Paradise, length of Adam's
life in, 155
Paradis, the, see under
"Dante."
Paradox of prayer, the, 85
Pargoletta, 241, 255, 256,
270, 363 *n.*
Parkelion, 153
Paris, 58, 170
Paris, University of, 56,
57, 139, 401
Parma, 89
Parmenides, 76
Parnassus, 2
Parrhasian hills, 335, 336
Parthenope, 328
Paterini, the, 478
Paternoster, 135, 324
Patronage, sale of, 157
Paul, the Apostle, 108, 120,
125, 140, 165, 166, 365,
404
Paul, his Epistle to the
Hebrews, 140
Paul, his vision in Para-
dise, 1, 84, 166
Paul, legend of his descent
into Hell, 372
Paul, the Deacon, 29, 371
Pavia, 56, 58
Pearl, the, how formed,
255
Pearl, imagery from, 13
Pearl applied to Mercury,
34
Pearl applied to the moon,
8
Pearl powder, 87
Pearls "before swine,"
328
Pearls, the souls of the
blessed compared to,
127
Pegasean Muse, 106
Pelican, the mystic, 148
Pellico, Silvio, 434, 473,
494
Pelorus, 43, 338, 339, 341
Penance, 321
Peneus, 2, 330
Peneus shore, 331
Pennaforte, Raimondo da,
52
Pepoli, Taddeo, 69
Pepper, 334
Pera, Della, family, 95
Perfect cube, emblem of
stability, 98
Perfect happiness is a
"contemplative en-
ergy," 165
Perfect theologian, a, 54
Perini, 330, 331, 338
Perpetua and Felicitas,
Acts of, 371
Perse, 13, 286, 300
Persian mystics, 248
Persians, 112
Persius, 60
Persons, "the Three in
the Trinity are, God is,"
143
Perugia, 32, 61, 62
Peruzzi, 95
Peter, St., the Apostle,
129, 137, 139, 142, 143,
144, 145, 148, 150, 155,
189, 190
Peter, St., and St. Paul,
108
Peter, St., barque of, 64
Peter, St., church of, at
Rome, 180, 181
Peter, St., line of, 52
Peter, St., See of, 124
Peter of Aragon, 113, 114
Peter Damiani, see under
"Damiani"
Peter the Lombard, 140,
146, 398
Peter the Lombard, his
Book of Sentences, 57,
398
Peter Mangiador, 71
Peter the Sinner, 125
Peter of Spain, 71
Petrarch, 42, 44, 58, 108,
118, 200, 261, 350, 415,
416, 428, 491
Petrimala, proverb, 352
Pettinagno, Pier, 287
Phædra, 99
Phaëthon 81, 97, 184
Pharaoh, 304
Pharos, 328
Pharsalia, 31
"Philaethes," 489
Philip Augustus, 184
Philip le Bel, 60, 112, 113,
114, 258, 374, 376
Philip the Second, 72
Phœnicia, 158
"Phoenix, the," Anglo-
Saxon poem, 372
Phrygian-born, 336
Phrygian does, 328
Phyllis, 50, 334
Pia, La, 17
Piava, the river, 47
Picardy, 58
Piccarda, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18,
19, 21, 22, 26
"Pie Pelicane," 148
Pier de la Vigne, 347, 434
Pieraccio, see Tedaldi
Pierian, 329
Pierides, see "Muses"
Piero, 63
Pietra de' Scrovigni, 248,
250, 266
Pietro degli Onesti, 125

- Pigli family, arms of, 94
 Pilate, Pontius, 32
 Pilgrims, 181, 204, 243
Pindar, 257
Pino of Signa, 92
 Pisa, 102, 134, 392
 Pisa, its commerce with Cyprus, 114
 Pisa, Campo Santo at, 57, 126
 Pisano, Niccola and Giovanni, 390
 Pistoia, 92, 102
 Pitti family, 92
 Pius I., Pope, 157
 Pius IX., Pope, 479
 Planetary influences, 259, 402
 Plato, 4, 12, 18, 19, 20, 58, 98, 150, 220, 257, 327, 359, 371, 422, 430
 Platonism, 337, 403, 499
 Pleiades, 131
 Pliny, 93
 Plural pronoun used for the singular, 90
Plutarch, 98
 Po, the river, 31, 328, 339, 340
 Po, the valley of the, 89
 Podestà appointed over Cyprus, 114
 Poetic temperament, the, 27
Poetry, Latin, Provençal, and Italian, 199
 Poggetto, Cardinal del, 318, 436, 531
 Poggio, Andrea, Dante's nephew, 415
 Pole-star, the, 7
 Polenta, see "Guido"
 Polo, Marco, 62, 66, 112, 392, 519
 Polo, a Venetian form for "Paolo," 108
Poltmann defends Clement V. and the Roman Curia, 179
 Polyhymnia, 134
 Polyphemus, 341
 Polysemum, al. Polysensuum, 359
 Pompeian clarion, 32
 Pompey, Cn., 31, 32, 88
Pontasieve, 92
Ponte Carraia, catastrophe at, in A.D. 1304, 99, 373
 Ponte Vecchio, 91, 414
 "Poor Hermits" of Celestine V., 70
 Pope, the, 51, 52, 89, 318
 Pope, only one placed by Dante in Paradise, 71
 Pope Alexander III., 172
 Pope Alexander IV., 17
 Pope Boniface VIII., see under "Boniface"
 Pope Celestine III., 17
 Pope Celestine V., 77, 401
 Pope Clement IV., 395
 Pope Clement V., 52, 69, 89, 101, 113, 157, 178, 258, 366, 368, 374, 527
 Pope Gregory I., 51, 52, 98, 116, 165
 Pope Gregory VI., 124
 Pope Gregory VII., 105, 124
 Pope Gregory IX., 52
 Pope Gregory XII., 161
 Pope Honorius III., 63, 69, 172
 Pope Innocent III., 52, 63, 69, 172, 177
 Pope John XXI., 71
 Pope John XXII., 52, 70, 89, 155, 157, 160, 318, 366, 412, 423, 436, 531
 Pope Leo the Great, 63
 Pope Leo X., 436
 Pope Nicholas I., 52
 Pope Nicholas II., 124
 Pope Nicholas III., 51, 998
 Pope Nicholas IV., 435
 Pope Pius I., 157
 Pope Pius IX., 479
 Pope Sixtus I., 157
 Pope Stephen X., 124
 Pope Sylvester I., 116
 Pope Sylvester II., 59
 Pope Urban I., 157
Popes, their favourite argument in claiming authority over the Empire, 9
 "Popolo vecchio," 87
 Poppy, the, 334
Porta del Palio, at Verona, 187
 Porta St. Maria at Florence, 93
 Porta S. Piero, 91, 93, 94
 Porta Sole, 61
 Portiuncula, church of the, 17, 62
 Portugal, 114
 Post-resurrection knowledge, 78
 "Potencias, ultimate," 74
 Pot metal, 118
 "Powers," one of the orders of the heavenly hierarchy, 166
 Prague, the storming of, 112
 Prato, 92
 Prato, dialect of, 353
 Prayer, real object of, 97
 Prayer, Book of, 148
 Prayer, paradox of, 85
 Preachers, Order of, 68
 Preaching Friars, faults and follies of, 171
 Precious stones supposed to derive their virtue from the sun, 266
 Predestination, 120
 Pressa, Della, family, 94
 Pride, 324
 Primal cause, the, 44
 Primal equality, the, 85
 Primal light, the, 173
 Primal love, the, 100
 Primal unity, the, 83
 Primavera (spring-flowers), 175
 Primavera used for a lady's name, 201, 227, 308
 Primopilo (captain or centurion), 140
 Primum Mobile, 1, 4, 6, 11, 72, 73, 136, 142, 158, 159, 160, 161, 162, 163, 173, 175, 177, 244, 259, 350
 "Principalities," an order of the heavenly hierarchy, 166
 Priori, 88
 Prodigality no evidence of generosity, 289
 Pronominal verbs coined by Dante, 49, 131
 Provençal form of word, 108
 Provençal literature, 354
 Provençal poetry and poets, 199, 200, 208, 261, 309
 Provençals, 34
 Provence, 69
 Provence, the barons of, 34
 Provence, Toulouse in, 317
 Prudentius, 371
 Psalmody, sacred, purifying power of, 385
 Ptolemaic register of stars, the, 72
 Ptolemaic system, the, 1, 8, 11, 15, 40, 130, 161, 259, 402
 Ptolemy, 31, 32, 33, 105
 Ptolemy, his *Almagest*, 91

- Pucci, A., poet, 200
 Pulci, 95
 Pulzella, 200
 Pumice dust of Etna, the, 340
 Purgatorial teaching, 346
 Purgatory, the doctrine of, ignored in Dante's paraphrase of the Creed, 320
 Purgatory, St. Patrick's, 371
 Purification, the mountain of, 369, 379, 382, 383, 392, 418, 506, 509, 513
 Pyrenees, 114
 Pyreneus, 339, 340
 Pyrrhus, 30, 33
 Pythagoras, 150
 Pythagorean doctrine of transmigration, 334
 Pythagorean theories, 4, 81, 85
 Quadrature of the circle, 76, 195
 Quale et quantum, 10
 Queen of Angels, 185
 Queen of Heaven, 183, 184, 189, 192
 "Quem deus vult perdere," 100
 "Qui judicatis terram," 106
 "Quicunque vult," 73
 "Quicunque vult," paraphrase of part of the, 143
 Quicquid facimus, 126
 Quiddity, 118, 140
 Quinet, 200, 470, 475
 Quintus Cincinnatus, see "Cincinnatus"
 Quirino, Giovanni, 306, 307
 Quirinus (Romulus), 45
 Rabanus Maurus, 71
 Races at Florence, 91
 Rachel, 182, 185, 306, 407
 Ragusa, 114
 Rahab, 51
 Raimond Berenger, 34
 Rainbows, 66, 195
 Rainier, Count of Braganza, 47
 Raleigh, Sir Walter, 358, 428
 Raphael, the Archangel, 19
 Raphael d'Urbino, his Madonna, &c. 192, 419, 420, 490, 532
 Rascia (Ragusa), 114
 Rationalism in the Mediseval Church, 37
 Ravenna, 31, 57, 124, 125, 128, 153, 170, 305, 328, 335, 337, 338, 339, 383, 398, 410, 435, 436, 508, 517
 Ravignani, 87, 94
 Raymond Berlinghieri, see "Berenger."
 Raymond de Pennaforte, 52
 Raymond, Count of Toulouse, 50
 Rebecca, 185
 Red Sea, the, 32
 Regalia, the heavenly, 55
 Regensburg (Ratisbon), 56
 Regina Cœli, 137
 Regnum Cœlorum, 118
 "Regula fidei," the Christian's, 26
 Renaissance, influence of the, 421, 423
 Reno, the river, 333, 339, 341
 Renouard, 105
Responsions at Oxford, 139
 "Resumpta carne," 82
 Resurrection hymn, 82
 Reynolds, Sir Joshua, 439
 Rhea Silvia, 45
 Rheims, 58, 177
 Rhene (Rhine), 31
 Rhipheus, 117, 118, 119, 120, 404
 Rhodopean maid, the (Phyllis), 50
 Rhone, the river, 31, 42
 Rialto, the, 47
 Richard, Count of St. Boniface, 47
 Richard de Camino, 48, 164
 Richard, Earl of Cornwall
 Richard the First, King of England, 50, 72
 Richard of St. Victor, 58, 376, 397
 Rivarol, De, 469
 River of Light, the, 176
 Robert, Duke of Calabria, brother of Charles Martell, 42, 43, 44, 46
 Robert, anecdote of, 44
 Robert, King of Naples, 46, 101, 113, 180, 328, 339, 531
 Roccasecca, 56
 Rodolph of Hapsburg, 42, 43, 376
 Rogers, Charles, 439
 Romagna, 92
 Romagnuolo, 340
 Roman Breviary, the, 135, 137, 146
 Roman Curia, corruption of the, 107
 "Roman de la Rose," Italian paraphrase of, 59
 Roman Eagle, the, 33
 Romano, the hill, 47
 Romans, the, 31, 91
 Rome, 30, 31, 49, 52, 56, 64, 87, 88, 90, 112, 156, 180, 243, 358, 375, 518
 Rome, capture of, by the Gauls, 30
 Rome, the dialect of, 353
 Rome, the See of, 69
Romena, Alessandro da, 245
 Romeo de' Pepoli, 338
 Romeo of Provence, 34, 287
 Romoaldo, St., 128
 Romulus, 45
 Rooks, 122
 Rose, the, 135
 Rose, the golden, 177, 186
 Rose, the mystic, 135, 177, 185, 189, 191, 406
 Rose, a white, 179
 Rose window of Gothic cathedrals, 177, 186, 372
 Rosmini, Antonio, 433, 473, 494
Rossellino della Tosa, 14
 Rossetti, D. G., 466, 471
 Rossetti, Gabriele, 297, 305, 360, 364, 433, 471, 478, 488
 Rossetti, Maria, 466 n., 492
Rosso della Tosa, 88
Royal Declaration, prefixed to the Thirty-Nine Articles, 120
 Rubicon, 31, 340
 Rubies, 27, 109, 176
 Rue de Fouarre, Paris, 58, 523
 Rufus, William, 71
 Ruggieri, Archbishop, 435
 Ruskin, 417 n., 461, 509
 Rusticucci, 286
 Ruth, 185
 Sabellius, 76, 77
 Sabine women, the, 30
 Sacchetti family, 94, 112, 327
 Sacchetti, writer, 172
 Sacha, Hans, 481
 Sackville, 428, 431, 438
 Sacraments, the seven, of the Latin Church, 321

- Saints in Paradise, their humility, 123
 Saints, whether they move in time, 54
 Saints see all things in God, 85, 102, 109, 121, 139, 153
Salione Buzzicarini, 47
 Salterello, Lapo, 88, 100, 171
 "Salute," 175
 "Salute," two meanings of, 228
 "Salute" and "saluto," 205
 Salvani, Provenzano, 434
 "Salve caput cruentatum," 183
 Samuel, the prophet, 19
 Sannella family, the, 93
 Santi, Antonio, 437
Sanzia of Provence, 34
 Sapphiere, 136
 Saracens, 51, 105
 Sarah, 185
 Sardanapalus, 87
 Sarpina, 333
 Sarrazzano, 201
Sarum Missal, sequence in the, 82, 155
 Sarzana, treaty of, 317 n.
 Satan, 52
 Satisfaction, Divine doctrine of, 38
 Satisfaction, human, 38
 Saturn, planet, 105, 121, 131, 259
 Saturn, the golden age under its influence, 122
 Saved, number of the, 186
 Savenna, the river, 333, 339, 341
Savonarola, 86, 422
 Scævola, Mucius, 21
 Scala, Alberto della, 102
 Scala, Can Grande, see under "Can Grande"
 Scaligeri, the, 100
 Scaligeri, the ladder in their armorial bearings, 122
 Scartazzini, 495
 Scetis, desert of, 128
Scheffer, Ary, 3
Schiff family, 16
 Schiller, Frederick, 482
 Schlegel, A. W. von, 484
 Schlegel, Frederick von, 485
 Scholastic fancies, 152
 Schools, mediæval, impractical questions discussed in, 75
 Scipio, 31, 157
 Scot, the, 113
Scotus, 165
 "Screen," the lady, 201, 204, 208, 209, 216, 230, 252, 312
 Scriptures, the, 26, 147, 168, 188
 Scriptures, authority of, supreme, 141
 Scriptures the ground of Dante's arguments for his faith, 143
 Scriptures, lowliness in reading them a condition of illumination, 170
 Scriptures, neglect or perversion of, 52, 170
 Sea of Divine love, 16
 Seal and wax, 3
 Second coming of our Lord, 132
 Second death, the, 119
 Seine, the river, 31, 112
 Self-love, delusions of, 76
 Selvaggia, 201, 317
 Semele, 121
Semiramis, 47
 "Sempiternal substances," 150
 Sena Gallica, 93
 Seneca, 99, 100, 293, 397
 Sens, 58
 Sentences of Peter Lombard, 71, 398
Sennuccio Benuccio, 314
 Seraph, 124
 Seraphim, 19, 41, 49, 163, 165, 173
 Sergestus, 338
 Serravalle, Giovanni da, 421, 427, 524
Serventese, 200, 201
 Servia, 114
Sestina, 261, 355
Sestina, a double, 265
 Severino, St., 58
 Shakespere, 67, 88, 102, 429, 437, 439, 500
 Sheba, the Queen of, 395
 Shelley, P. B., 117, 444
 Shem, 352
 Shooting star, 83
 "Si," the language of, 352
 "Si est dare," 75
 Sibyl, the, 193
 Sibylline leaves, 193, 194
 Sicanians, 338
 Sichesius, 50
 Sicilian dialect, 353
 Sicilian fields, 338
 Sicilian hills, 341
 Sicilian Vespers, 43, 212, 225
 Sicily, 113, 114, 338, 339
 Sidney, Sir Philip, 428, 430, 431
 Siena, 92, 102, 434
 Sigieri of Courtrai, 58, 59, 60, 473, 478, 523
 Signa, in Tuscany, 92
 Signa, Bonifazio da, 92
 Signorelli, Luca, 418
 Sile, the river, 48
 Silkworm, the, 42, 512
 Simeon Donati, 99
 Simifonte, castle of, 92
 Simois, the river, 32
 Simon de' Bardi, 87, 88
 Simon Magus, 179, 304
 Simon de Montfort, 69
Simon du Val, 59
Simonides, 98
 Simony rampant at Rome, 99
 Sin, true nature of the first, 153
 Sin, post-baptismal, 321
 "Sine causa," 187
 Sinigaglia, 93
 Sinon, "the false Greek," 304
 Sina, the seven deadly, 243
 Sirens, the, 65
 Sirocco, the, 43, 507
 Sixtus I., Pope, 157
 Sisi family, 94
 Smith, Rev. Sydney, 442
 Snow, 11, 192, 193
 Socrates, 430
 Sodom, 303
 Soldan, the, 64
 Soldanieri, 93
 Solitaires, 31
 Solomon, 57, 73, 74, 75, 76, 79, 80, 395
 Solomon, whether saved, 57
 Solon, 45
 "Sonetto doppio," 201
 Song of Songs, the, mystically interpreted by St. Bernard, 57
 Song of Songs, how viewed by the mediæval mystics, 79
 Sophisms, 60
 Sophocles, 50, 102
Sorbonne, Robert, 59
 Sordello, 47, 200, 353, 375, 376 509
 Sora, the river, 42
 Soul, "the body's bride," 287

- Souls of the blessed compared to pearls, 127
Souls of the blessed compared to rubies, 109, 176
Souls of the blessed compared to topazes, 86, 176
Souls in Paradise, their rejoicings, 78
Southern Cross, the, 392, 519
Southey's "Vision of Judgment," 368, 444
Spain, 31, 50, 58, 67, 113, 144, 170, 171
Speech the attribute of man, 351
Spenser, Edmund, 227, 358, 428, 429, 430
"Sperent in Te," 146, 147
Speziale, 410
Spheres, correspondence of the, 164
Spheres, the music of the, 4
Sphinx, the, 327
Spirit, the Holy, 15, 112
"Spiriti," how to be understood, 212, 213, 215, 217
Spirits in Paradise remain at the age in which they depart, 187
"Spirits in Prison, the," cited, 111, 120
Spiritual Franciscans, the, 70, 72
Squaring the circle, 76, 195
Stained glass, 118
Stanley, Dean A. P., 228
Star-ladder, the, 122
Starlings, 511
Stars, the, 162, 196, 338, 408, 418
Stars, the four, 359, 369, 383
Stars, shooting, 83
Statius, 3, 119, 132, 149, 152, 289, 326, 327, 350, 490, 513
Stellar influences, 20, 40, 53, 100, 107, 154, 188, 259, 303
Stephen V., King of Hungary, 114
Stephen Uroscius, King of Rascia (Ragusa), 114
Stephen X., Pope, 124
Sterling, John, 228
Stigmata, 64
Stipo of Megara, 76
Stork, the, 111
Strabo, 71, 93
Strasburg, 59
Stratford de Redcliffe, Lord, 326
Street of Straw, Paris, 58, 523
Students of the four nations at Paris, 58
"Suabian Stormblast, the second," 17
Subasio, hill of, 61
Subiaco, 127
Subjective comparisons, 202
Sudarium of St. Veronica, 183, 243
Suetonius, 31
Sultan, the, 64
Sultan of Egypt, 59
"Summæ Deus clementiæ," 387
Sumptuary laws of Florence, 86
Sun, the, in mediæval astronomy, 115
Sun the emblem of the uncreated light, 3
Sun of the angels, viz., God, 55
Sun and moon, Papal symbolism of, 9
Sunrise, complicated description of, 173
"Sunt et est" combined, 143
"Supereffluent grace," 79
Surrey, Lord, 431
"Swords to Scripture's sense," 77
Sylvester, the Franciscan, 63
Sylvester I., Pope, 116
Sylvester II., Pope, 59
Symonds, J. A., 466 n.
Taddeo, 169
Tagliamento, 48
Tagliazucchi, 166
Tagus, 67
Tailor, proverbial saying of the, 190
Tancred de Hauteville, father of Robert Guiscard, 105
Tares and wheat, 120
Tarragona, 57
Tartars, 392
Tartarus, 327, 346, 369
Tasso, 422, 431
Taurus, zodiacal sign, 130
Taylor, Jer., 430
Tedaldi, Pieraccio, 413
Te Deum, 35, 142, 186, 387
Templars, the, 60, 112, 258, 298, 374
Templars, the Grand Master of, 113
Teneriffe, Peak of, 392
Teniers, 172
Tenison, Archbishop, 47
Tennyson, Lord, 235, 288, 435, 447, 526
Ter Sanctus, 79, 152
Terence, 327, 357, 397
Tertiary Order, 26, 383
Tertullian, 267, 367, 371
Terza rima, 261, 355, 356
Terzarima, probable inventor of, 261
Terza rima, first use of, 355
Tethys, 40
Tetragrammaton, the sacred, 154
Thalia, 357
Themis, 298
Theodora, the Empress, 29
Theodoric, 58
Theologian, the perfect, 54
"Theologus" (St. John), 149
Theology, like geometry, has insoluble problems, 196
Theophylact, 173
Thestylis, 335
Thirlwall, Bishop, 153, 450
Thirteenth century, character of, 370, 392
Thomas, St., the Apostle, 95
Thomas, St., of Aquino, see "Aquinas"
Thomas, St., of Celano, 61
Thracian breezes, 164
Three, Dante's mystic reference for the number, 356
"Thrones" an order of the heavenly hierarchy, 49, 165
Thyme, wild, 334
Tiber, the river, 61, 64, 73
Tiberius Cæsar, 32, 183
Tides, lunar theory of the, 93
Tierce and Nones, 86
Timæus of Plato, the, 12, 18, 20
Tiraboschi, 423
Titus, the Emperor, 32, 33, 36
Tityrus, 327, 330, 331, 332, 333, 334, 335, 336, 337, 338, 339, 340
Tobia (Tobit), 19

- Topaz, 27, 86, 176
"Tornata" (L'Envoi), 208
 Torquatus, T. Manlius, 31
 Tosa, Cianghella della, 88
 Tosa, Rossellino della, 14, 88
Tosinghi, 100
Toynbee, Mr. Paget, 59, 90
 Trajan, the Emperor, 116, 118, 119, 120, 371
"Transhumanised," 4
 Transmigration, the Pythagorean doctrine of, 334
 Transubstantiation, 4
 Trench, Archbishop, 173, 228, 403
 Trespiano, 92
 Trevigiana, 47, 48
 Trevisa, 48
 Trinacria, 43, 339
 Trinacrian heights, 340
 Trinity, the Divine, 73, 74, 79, 85
 Trinity in unity, 195
 Trivia (the moon), 133
 Trivium and quadrivium, 139, 256, 259
 Trojan war, the, 93
 Trojans, 88
 Tronto, the river, 43
 Troubadours, 200, 387
 Troubled sea, the, of perverted love, 151
 Troy, 29, 30, 88
"Truth before prudence," 102
 Truths contingent and necessary, 97, 98
 Tupino (the river), 61
 Turnus, 30
 Tuscan man, 50
 Tuscany, 130, 317
 Tuscany, the dialect of, 353
 Tuscany, the league of, 92
Tusculum, 71
 Typhæus, 43
 Tyrrhenian waves, 329
 Ubaldo of Agubbio, 92
 Ubaldo, St., 61
 Uberti, 286, 302
 Uberti, Farinata degli, 90, 291, 366
 Uberti, Fazio degli, see *"Fazio"*
 Uberti, Lapo degli, 201
 Uberti, Mosca degli, 94
 Ubertino da Casale, 70
 Ubertino Donati, 95
 Ubi, 165
"Ubi quando," 167
 Uccellatoio, 87
 Ugguccione della Faggiuola, 328, 365, 366, 374, 410
 Ughi family, 93
 Ugo Foscolo, 365
 Ugo of Brandenburg, 95
 Ugolino, 435
Uhland, 90
 Ulysses, 158, 341, 392
Una, 227
 Urania, 177, 357
 Uranus and Terra, 131
 Urban I., Pope, 157
 Urbisaglia, city of, 93
Urbs Salvia, 93
 Uroscius (Stephen) I., King of Ragusa, 114
 Ursa Major, 180, 269
 Ursa Minor, 72
Ussher's Bible chronology, 154
 Uxary, 129
 Val d'Arno, 91, 92
 Val d'Elsa, 91
 Val di Grieve, 92
 Val di Pado, 89
Val, Simon du, Inquisitor, 59
Valence, 31
 Valerius Flaccus, 194
 Vallombrosa, 508
 Valois, the House of, 114
 Vanna, *"Primavera,"* 201, 226, 227
 Varo (the river Var), 31
Vasari, 192
 Vatican, the, 52
 Vaucluse, 42
 Vecchio family, 87
"Veltro," 52
 Veltro, prophecy respecting, 157
"Veni, Sponsa, de Libano," 388
 Venice, 134, 392, 518
 Venice, denari and ducats of, 114
 Venice, the *Liber Aureus* of, 114
"Venite, benedicti Patrie Mei," 387
 Venus Aphrodite, 40, 48, 298
 Venus, the planet, 40, 41, 259, 506
 Venus, the sphere of, 40, 41, 51, 277
Verba Aurea of Ægidius, 63
 Verde, the river (the Garigliano), 43
 Vernon, Lord, 416 n.
 Vernon, Hon. W. W., 416 n.
 Verona, 48, 89, 100, 124, 138, 155, 170, 187, 305, 317 n., 375, 395, 410
 Veronica, 183, 243, 244, 518
 Vespers, the Sicilian, 43, 212, 225
 Via de' Bardi, 201
 Vicenza, 48
 Victor, St. Adam of, 3, 150, 151
 Victor, Hugh of St., 150, 161, 168, 376, 395, 398, 401
 Victor, St., monastery of, 71
 Victor, St., Richard of, 150, 376, 397, 401
Victorinus, 58
 Victory *"won with both hands,"* 51
 Villani, 30, 34, 42, 44, 81, 86, 88, 89, 90, 95, 100, 273, 303, 410, 414, 415
Vincent de Beauvais, 66
 Vine clasping the elm, 334
 Vine emblem of the Church, 142
"Vinum non habent," 390
 Virgin, the Blessed, see *"Mary"*
 Virgil, 12, 13, 19, 26, 30, 32, 40, 43, 45, 50, 57, 67, 72, 83, 97, 101, 104, 111, 113, 117, 122, 132, 133, 134, 138, 154, 162, 164, 174, 179, 193, 200, 326, 327, 329, 333, 334, 335, 338, 341, 346, 350, 351, 359, 361, 369, 371, 383, 391, 404, 406, 407, 409, 414, 418, 490, 509, 513, 514, 516
 Virgil known to Peter of Aragon, 113
 Virgilio, Joannes de, 144, 326, 350, 365, 410
 Virtue and potency, in the terminology of Aristotle, 53
"Virtues" an order of the heavenly hierarchy, 166
"Virtus sola nobilitas," 89, 288
"Virus non cognosco," 390
 Visdomini, the, 95
 Vision, the beatific, 193, 308

- VITA NUOVA, the, 134, 345, 346, 349, 350, 356, 360, 361, 362, 364, 369, 381, 405, 407, 409, 411, 429, 477, 478, 496, 499, 527
 Viterbo, 49, 87
Vitry, Cardinal de, 66
 "Voi" for "Tu," 90
 "*Volat avis sine mela*," 3
 Voltaire, 7, 367, 468, 472, 500
 "Vos," mediæval tradition as to its use, 90
 Vows, commutation of, 23, 25
 Vows, dispensation from, 24, 25
 "*Vulgar tongue, the*," 84
 "*Vulgari Eloquio*, De," Dante's treatise, 351, 362, 364
 Wain, or Great Bear, the, 72
 Walking dreams, two classes of, 170
 Walkelin, vision of, 372
Wallace, Sir William, 113
 Walpole, Horace, 438
 Warburton, Bishop, 431
 Warton, Thomas, 438
 Wegele, F. X., 489
 Wells Cathedral, 165
 Wells, Diocesan Registers of, 157
 Wells historical MSS., 69, 157, 527
 Wellesley, Lord, 326
 Wenceslaus IV., King of Bohemia, 113
Westcott, B. F., 54, 165
 Western Christendom at the beginning of the nineteenth century, 67
Westminster Abbey, 59
Westminster Abbey, clock erected there in A.D. 1288, 138
 Wettin of Reichenau, 371
 Whirling of the soul, 124
 "Wider Hope, the," 112, 120
 Wilkes, 368
William the Bad, 17
 William, St., of the Desert, 105
 William the Good, 117
 epitaph on his tomb, 117
 William de Nogaret, 60
 William of Orange, 105
 William Rufus, 71
 Winter, 268
 Winter solstice, the, 158
 Wisdom, Giotto's fresco of, at Assisi, 260
 Witte's researches in the Ambrosian Library at Milan, 205; his labours on Dante, 487
Wolfram von Eschenbach, 105
 Works, effect of, in shortening purgatorial discipline, 86
 Wordsworth, 224, 383, 439, 444, 515
 Wyatt, Sir Thomas, 431
 Xerxes, 45
 Yod, the Hebrew, 154
 York, Hon. Charles, 438
 Zara, the game of, 517
 Zebedee, James the son of, 146
 Zenghis Khan, 112
 Zephyr, 67
 Zodiac, 53

INDEX OF FIRST LINES OF THE MINOR POEMS.

(*Italian and Latin.**)

		PAGE
A ciascun' alma presa e gentil core	Son. i.	199
Al poco giorno, ed al gran cerchio d'ombra	Sest. i.	261
Amor, che muovi tua virtù dal cielo	Canz. xii.	270
Amor che nella mente mia ragiona	Canz. xv.	279
Amor, dacchè convien pur ch' io mi doglia	Canz. viii.	245
Amor e cor gentil sono una cosa	Son. x.	219
Amor mi mena tal fiata all' ombra	Sest. ii.	263
Amor, tu vedi ben, che questa donna	Canz. x.	265
Ballata, io vo' che tu ritruovi Amore	Ball. iv.	209
Cavalcando l' altr' ier per un cammino	Son. iv.	204
Chi guarderà giammai senza paura	Son. xxxv.	255
Ciò, che m' incontra nella mente, muore	Son. viii.	212
Coll' altre donne mia vista gabbate	Son. vii.	211
Color d' amore e di pietà sembianti	Son. xxvi.	241
Così nel mio parlar voglio esser aspro	Canz. ix.	248
Dagli occhi della mia donna si muove	Son. xxi.	230
Da quella luce, che il suo corso gira	Son. xxxix.	259
Deh Nuvoletta, che in ombra d' Amore	Ball. v.	229
Deh peregrini, che pensosi andate	Son. xxx.	243
Di donne io vidi una gentile schiera	Son. xix.	228
Doglia mi reca nello core ardire	Canz. xviii.	292
Donna pietosa e di novella etate	Canz. iv.	223
Donne ch' avete intelletto d' amore	Canz. ii.	213
Donne, io non so di' che mi preghi Amore	Ball. vi.	251
Due donne in cima della mente mia	Son. xlii.	305
E'm' incresce di me sì malamente	Canz. iii.	216
E' non è legno di sì forti nocchi	Son. xxxvii.	257
Era venuta nella mente mia	Son. xxiv.	239
Forte sub irriguo colles, ubi Sarpina Rheno	Ecl. iii.	333
Fresca rosa novella	Ball. xii.	308
Gentil pensiero, che parla di vui	Son. xxviii.	242
Gli occhi dolenti per pietà del core	Canz. vi.	235
Gran nobiltà mi par vedere all' ombra	Sest. iii.	264
Guido, vorrei che tu e Lapo ed io	Son. ii.	200
In abito di saggia messagera	Ball. iii.	208
Io maledico il dì ch' io vidi in prima	Son. xxxii.	250
Io mi credea del tutto esser partito	Son. xl.	304
Io mi sentii svegliar dentro allo core	Son. xvi.	226
Io mi son pargoletta bella e nuova	Ball. ix.	256

* *Ball.*, Ballata; *Canz.*, Canzone; *Ecl.*, Eclogue; *Sest.*, Sestina; *Son.*, Sonetto; *St. Stanza*.

556 INDEX OF FIRST LINES OF THE MINOR POEMS.

	PAGE
Io scriasi già d' amor più volte rime	Prof. di Fede . . . 318
Io sento al d' Amor la gran possanza	Canz. xlii. . . . 273
Io son sì vago della bella luce	Son. xxii. . . . 231
Io son venuto al punto della rota	Canz. xi. . . . 268
Io sono stato con Amore insieme	Son. xxxiii. . . . 253
La dispietata mente che pur mira	Canz. i. . . . 205
L' amaro lagrimar chi voi faceste	Son. xxvii. . . . 241
Lasso ! per forza de' molti sospiri	Son. xxix. . . . 243
Le dolci rime d' amor, ch' io solia	Canz. xvi. . . . 282
Lo re, che merta i suoi servi a ristoro	Son. xlv. . . . 307
Madonna, quel signor, che voi portate	Ball. vii. . . . 252
Molti, volendo dir che fosse Amore	Son. xlv. . . . 310
Morte, poich' io non truovo a cui mi doglia	Canz. v. . . . 232
Morte villana, di pietà nemica	Ball. ii. . . . 203
Negli occhi porta la mia donna Amore	Son. xi. . . . 220
Nulla mi parrà mai più crudel cosa	Son. xliii. . . . 306
O dolci rime, che parlando andate	Son. xx. . . . 230
Oltre la spera, che più larga gira	Son. xxxi. . . . 244
Onde venite voi così pensose	Son. xv. . . . 223
O patria, degna di trionfal fama	Canz. xx. . . . 301
Ora che'l mondo s' adorna e si veste	Son. xlv. . . . 311
O voi, che per la via d' Amor passate	Ball. i. . . . 201
Parole mie, che per lo mondo siete	Son. xxxiv. . . . 254
Per quella via che la bellezza corre	Son. xxxviii. . . . 258
Per una ghirlandetta	Ball. viii. . . . 252
Per villania di villana persona	Son. xlvii. . . . 312
Piangete, amanti, poichè piange Amore	Son. iii. . . . 202
Pieridum vox alma, novis qui cantibus orbem	Ecl. i. . . . 326
Poichè saziar non posso gli occhi miei	Ball. xi. . . . 308
Poichè, sguardando, il cor feriste in tanto	Son. xlviii. . . . 312
Poich' io non trovo chi meco ragioni	Son. xli. . . . 305
Poiscia ch' Amor del tutto m'ha lasciato	Canz. xvii. . . . 288
Poiscia ch' i' ho perduta ogni speranza	Canz. xxi. . . . 314
Quantunque volte (ahi lasso !) mi rimembra	Canz. vii. . . . 238
Se'l bello aspetto non mi fosse tolto	Son. v. . . . 205
Se' tu colui c' ha trattato sovente	Son. xliii. . . . 221
Se vedi gli occhi miei di pianger vaghi	Son. xxxvii. . . . 258
Si lungamente m' ha tenuto Amore	St. . . . 234
Spesse fiate venemi alla mente	Son. ix. . . . 213
Tanto gentile e tanto onesta pare	Son. xvii. . . . 227
Togliete via le vostre porte omai	Son. xlix. . . . 313
Tre donne intorno al cor mi son venute	Canz. xix. . . . 297
Tutti li miei pensier parlan d' Amore	Son. vi. . . . 210
Vede perfettamente ogni salute	Son. xviii. . . . 228
Velleribus Colohis prapes detectus Eòus	Ecl. iv. . . . 337
Venite a intender gli sospiri miei	Son. xxxiii. . . . 237
Videro gli occhi miei quanta pietate	Son. xxv. . . . 240
Vidimus in nigris albo patiente lituris	Ecl. ii. . . . 329
Voi che, intendendo, il terzo ciel movete	Canz. xiv. . . . 277
Voi, che portate la sembianza umile	Son. xii. . . . 221
Voi che sapete ragionar d' amore	Ball. x. . . . 260
Voi, donne, che pietoso atto mostrate	Son. xiv. . . . 222

INDEX OF FIRST LINES OF THE MINOR POEMS.

—◆—
(*Translation.*)

		PAGE
A gentle thought, which speaks to me of thee . . .	Son. xxviii.	242
Ah cloud, that, in Love's shadow sweeping past . . .	Ball. v.	229
Ah, gentle voice, to all the Muses dear . . .	Ecl. i.	326
Ah, me! as often as I call to mind . . .	Canz. vii.	238
Ah, me! by reason of the many sighs . . .	Son. xxix.	243
A lady pitiful, in youth's fresh bloom . . .	Canz. iv.	223
Along the pathway Beauty loves to tread . . .	Son. xxxviii.	258
A maiden young and beautiful am I . . .	Ball. ix.	256
And art thou he, who hath so often sung . . .	Son. xiii.	221
Beneath the hills well-watered, where we see . . .	Ecl. iii.	333
Beyond the sphere that wheel'eth widest round . . .	Son. xxxi.	244
By reason of a garland fair . . .	Ball. viii.	252
Come now, and listen ye to each sad sigh . . .	Son. xxiii.	237
Dear country, worthy of triumphal fame . . .	Canz. xx.	301
Dear rhymes, who, as ye go, hold converse sweet . . .	Son. x.	230
Death, since I find not one who with me grieves . . .	Canz. v.	232
Edous, with the Colchian fleece bedecked . . .	Ecl. iv.	337
Fain in my speech would I be harsh and rough . . .	Canz. ix.	248
Fresh rose, just newly born . . .	Ball. xii.	308
From my dear Lady's eyes a light doth gleam . . .	Son. xxi.	230
From that bright star which moveth on its way . . .	Son. xxxix.	259
Full many a time there comes into my thought . . .	Son. ix.	213
Full oft have I of Love writ many rhymes . . .	Con. of Faith.	318
Grief brings within my heart a spirit bold . . .	Canz. xviii.	292
Guido, I would that Lapo, thou, and I . . .	Son. ii.	200
He sees completely fullest bliss abound . . .	Son. xviii.	228
I am so eager for the beauteous light . . .	Son. xxii.	231
I curse the day when first I saw the light . . .	Son. xxxii.	250
I feel so much the potency of Love . . .	Canz. xiii.	273
I felt within, awakening in my heart . . .	Son. xvi.	226
If thou dost see mine eyes so fain to weep . . .	Son. xxxvii.	258
I have with Love in contact close been thrown . . .	Son. xxxiii.	253
In fashion of an envoy wise and true . . .	Ball. iii.	208
I saw a band of gentle dames pass by . . .	Son. xix.	228
I seem to see great glory in the shade . . .	Sest. iii.	264
I thought that I had parted evermore . . .	Son. xl.	304
I to that point in the great wheel have come . . .	Canz. xi.	268
I will that thou, my Song, find Love anew . . .	Ball. iv.	209
Ladies, I know not what of Love to pray . . .	Ball. vi.	251

558 INDEX OF FIRST LINES OF THE MINOR POEMS.

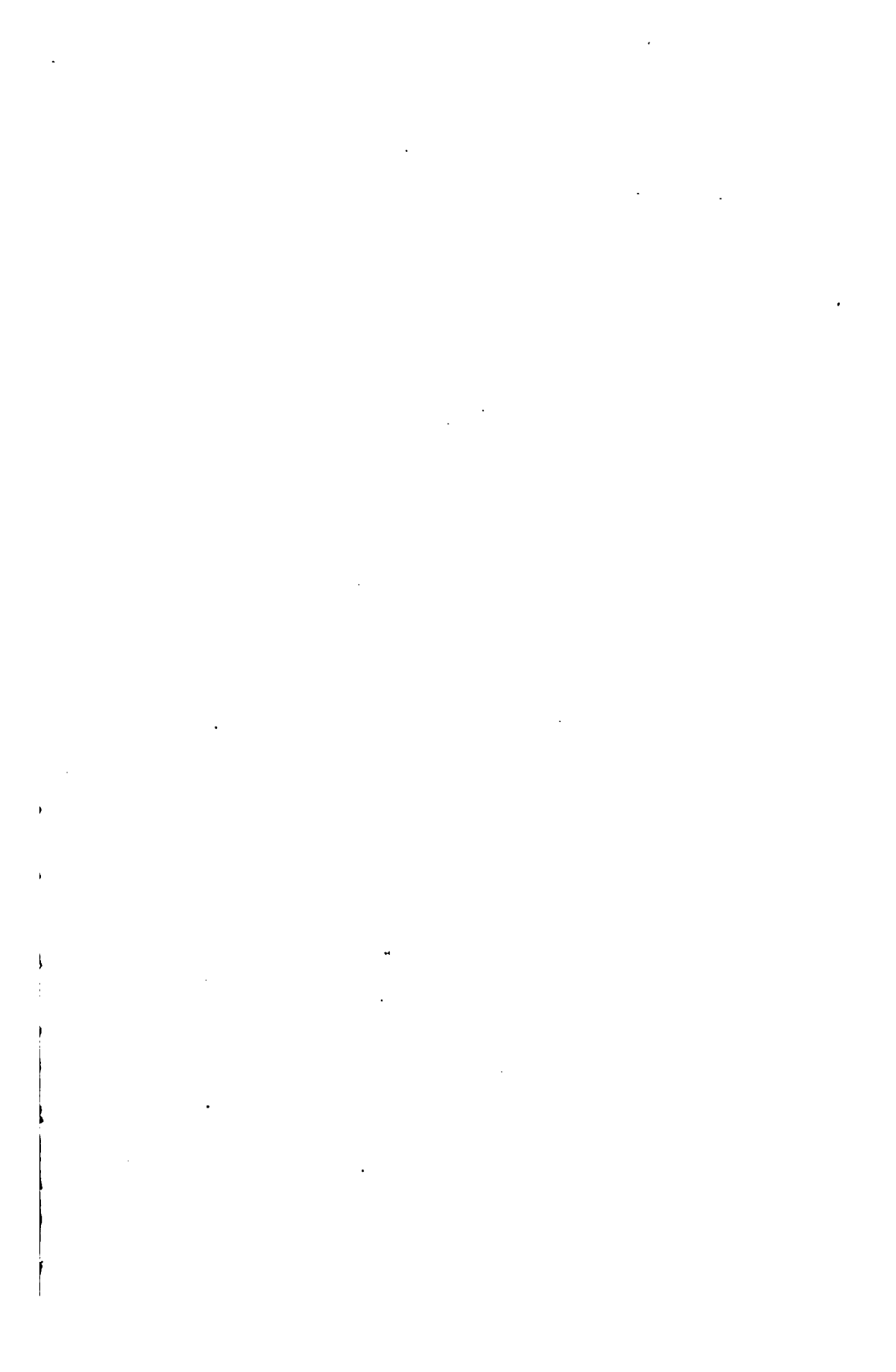
	PAGE
Ladies, who have intelligence of love . . .	Canz. ii. . . 213
Lady, the sovran Lord thou so dost bear . . .	Ball. vii. . . 225
Love and the gentle heart are one in kind . . .	Son. x. . . 219
Love leads me many times beneath the shade . . .	Sest. ii. . . 263
Love, since 'tis meet that I should tell my woe . . .	Canz. viii. . . 245
Love, thou see'st well that this my lady fair . . .	Canz. x. . . 265
Love, who doth often with my mind converse . . .	Canz. xv. . . 279
Love, who from heaven thy virtue dost unfold . . .	Canz. xii. . . 270
Love's pallid hue and sorrow's signs of woe . . .	Son. xxvi. . . 241
Many who fain would tell what Love may be . . .	Son. xlv. . . 310
Mine eyes beheld what pity deep and true . . .	Son. xxv. . . 240
My every thought is fain to speak of love . . .	Son. vi. . . 210
My lady beareth Love in her fair eyes . . .	Son. xi. . . 220
My sorrowing eyes, through pity for my mind . . .	Canz. vi. . . 235
My sorrowing soul, that only looks behind . . .	Canz. i. . . 205
No tree there is so gnarled and stiff to ply . . .	Son. xxxvi. . . 257
Nought can to me more pitiless appear . . .	Son. xliii. . . 306
Now that the world hath donned her bright array . . .	Son. xlvi. . . 311
O villain Death, of pity ruthless foe . . .	Ball. ii. . . 203
O ye who on Love's path pursue your way . . .	Ball. i. . . 201
O ye who with a mien of lowliness . . .	Son. xii. . . 221
Riding the other day along a road . . .	Son. iv. . . 204
Since every hope of mine hath from me gone . . .	Canz. xxi. . . 314
Since I have none who will with me converse . . .	Son. xli. . . 305
Since Love hath ceased my longing soul to fill . . .	Canz. xvii. . . 288
Since still I fail mine eyes to satisfy . . .	Ball. xi. . . 308
Since with thy glance thou so hast pierced my heart . . .	Son. xlvi. . . 312
So gentle and so fair she seems to be . . .	Son. xvii. . . 227
So long have I been prisoner held by Love . . .	St. . . 234
So sad and keen a grief comes over me . . .	Canz. iii. . . 216
That gentle Lady came upon my thought . . .	Son. xxiv. . . 239
That in my mind which clashes with it, dies . . .	Son. viii. . . 212
The king, who doth his servants recompense . . .	Son. xli. . . 307
The many bitter tears ye made me shed . . .	Son. xxvii. . . 241
The pleasant rhymes of love which 'twas my care . . .	Canz. xvi. . . 282
Those letters black on patient paper traced . . .	Ecl. ii. . . 329
Three ladies meet together round my heart . . .	Canz. xix. . . 297
Through baseness uttered by the base in mind . . .	Son. xlvii. . . 312
Throw open wide your gates in all men's sight . . .	Son. xlix. . . 313
To each enamoured soul, each gentle heart . . .	Son. i. . . 199
To shortened days and circle wide of shade . . .	Sest. i. . . 261
Two ladies to the summit of my mind . . .	Son. xliii. . . 305
Weep, all ye lovers, seeing Love doth weep . . .	Son. iii. . . 202
Were the sweet sight from me not ta'en away . . .	Son. v. . . 205
Whence come ye thus with trouble so o'erwrought . . .	Son. xv. . . 223
Who now will ever look devoid of fear . . .	Son. xxxv. . . 255
With other dames thou dost my looks deride . . .	Son. vii. . . 211
Ye ladies, who the mien of pity show . . .	Son. xiv. . . 222
Ye pilgrims, who pass on with thoughtful mien . . .	Son. xxx. . . 243
Ye who are skilled of Love discourse to hold . . .	Ball. x. . . 260
Ye who with wisdom high the third heaven move . . .	Canz. xiv. . . 277
Ye words of mine, whose voice the world doth fill . . .	Son. xxxiv. . . 254

INDEX OF SCRIPTURE TEXTS.

	PAGE		PAGE		PAGE
GENESIS.		xcii. 5 (Vulg.)	387	ii. 1...	397
i. ...	39	cii. 6 ...	148	ii. 10 ...	414
i. 1 ...	168	civ. 45 ...	168	ii. 13-15 ...	483
i. 2 ...	167	cxiv. 1 (Vulg.)	129, 146	xviii. 25 ...	120
i. 16 ...	9	cxxi. 1 ...	145	xx. 49 ...	258
i. 32 ...	74	cxxxi. 3 ...	194	xxviii. 12 ...	397
i.-iii. ...	153	cxxxviii. 7-9 ...	397	xxxiv. 3 ...	171
ii. 13 ...	299	cxxxix. 1 ...	85	DANIEL.	
iii. 5 ...	38	PROVERBS.		ii. ...	18
iv. 14 ...	390	Book of ...	79	vii. 9 ...	179
v. 5 ...	154	iii. 16 ...	71	vii. 10 ...	173
vi. 3 ...	154	viii. ...	20	x. 5 ...	179
ix. 8-17 ...	66	viii. 22-31 ...	280	HOSEA.	
x. 25 ...	154	xvi. 4 ...	6	xi. 4 ...	151
xi. 16 ...	154	xvi. 22 ...	191	JOEL.	
xxviii. 12 ...	122, 128	xvi. 27 ...	110	iii. 2 ...	132
EXODUS.		ECCLESIASTES,	79	TOBIT.	
vi. 3 ...	145	i. 4 ...	405	iii. 17 ...	19
xv. 25 ...	327	SONG OF SONGS, 57, 79, 248		v. 4, 6, 21 ...	19
xxiv. 10 ...	136		471	WISDOM.	
xxxiii. 19 (Vulg.)	151	i. 3 ...	109	i. 1 (Vulg.) ...	106
xxxiii. 20 ...	121	ii. 1, 16 ...	135	i. 7 ...	397
LEVITICUS.		iv. 8 ...	388	ii. 24 ...	52
xxvii. ...	23, 25	ISAIAH.		vii. 13 ...	397
xxvii. 9, 10, 28-33	25	iii. 16-24 ...	86	vii. 22-30 ...	280
JOSHUA.		iii. 17 ...	298	ECCLESIASTICUS.	
ii.-iv. ...	51	v. 1-4 ...	142, 160	iv. 16-18 ...	260
JUDGES.		v. 4 ...	69	v. 16 ...	397
vii. 3 ...	7	vi. 2 ...	49	vi. 20-28 ...	245
xv. 10 ...	185	vi. 3 ...	152	ix. 15 ...	111
I. KINGS.		xiv. 12 ...	40	xiii. 1-13 ...	99
iii. 5-9 ...	75	xiv. 12, 13 ...	169	xv. 3 ...	8
iii. 12 ...	57	xxx. 26 ...	4	xxviii. 1 ...	168
II. KINGS.		xxxviii. ...	116	xxiv. 21, 29 ...	8
xx. ...	116	xliv. 22 ...	389	xxiv. 27 (37 Vulg.)	299
JOB.		li. 9 ...	82	xlvi. 1-3 ...	51
xxxviii. 4 ...	110	lxi. 7 (Vulg.)	147	St. MATTHEW.	
PSALMS.		JEREMIAH.		i. 5 ...	185
ix. 11 (Vulg.)	146	i. 5 ...	346	vi. 22, 23 ...	111
xxxii. 1 (Vulg.)	387	ii. 2 ...	302	vii. 21 ...	109, 112
xxxii. 9 ...	26	vii. 4 ...	156	x. ...	62
xxxv. 6 ...	110	vii. 11 ...	129	xi. 12 ...	118
xxxv. 9 ...	155	xxii. 29 ...	156	xiii. 29 ...	77
xlii. 1 ...	22	xxiii. 24 ...	397	xiii. 52 ...	196
lvii. 2 (Vulg.)	106	LAMENTATIONS.	261	xv. 13 ...	52
lxviii. 1 ...	82	i. 1 ...	201, 235, 302	xvi. 17 ...	142
lxviii. 31 ...	112	EZEKIEL.		xvii. 1 ...	145
lxxxviii. 25 ...	8	i. 9 ...	386	xvii. 6, 7, ...	397
lxxxii. 6 ...	166	i. 10 ...	151	xix. 21 ...	68

St. MATT.— <i>contd.</i>	PAGE		PAGE		PAGE
xx. 1-16	69	I. CORINTHIANS.		xi. 1 (Vulg.)	140
xxi. 9, 15	35	ii. 9	1, 109	xii. 1, 22, 23	187
xxi. 12	108	ii. 14	25	xii. 4	21
xxi. 13	129	iii. 2	65, 134	xii. 23	169
xxv. 33	157	iv. 5	77	St. JAMES.	
xxvii. 46	81	xii. 4	74	i. 2, 5, 12, 25	146
St. MARK.		xiii. 9	8	i. 5	37
vi. 13	185	xiii. 12	13	i. 17	85, 111
xi. 9	35	xiv. 16	177	iii. 18	146
St. LUKE.		II. CORINTHIANS.		iv. 8, 10	146
i. 78	62	iii. 10	149	v. 4 (Vulg.)	35
vii. 42	51	viii. 9	62	v. 8, 15, 16	146
vii. 47	47	xii. 2-4	1, 84, 133	v. 14	185
ix. 58	62	xii. 3	397	I. St. PETER.	
xii. 47	112	xii. 3, 4	397	ii. 2	65, 134, 176
xv. 4	173	xii. 4	166	iii. 3	86
xv. 10	27	GALATIANS.		II. St. PETER.	
xvi. 9	15	iv. 4	191	i. 10	168
xvi. 16	118	EPHESIANS.		ii. 12	26
xxi. 1-4	57	i. 4	168	iii. 15	140
St. JOHN.		i. 21	165	I. St. JOHN.	
i. 1-14	151	iv. 10	397	iv.	151
i. 3-10	53	v. 4	171	REVELATION.	
i. 9	404	vi. 11-17	67	i. 8	397
i. 51	122	vi. 13-17	171	i. 19	58
ii. 13	108	PHILIPPIANS.		ii. 11	119
iii. 8 (Vulg.)	44	ii. 6 (R. V.)	110	iv. 3	109, 195
iv. 18	47	COLOSSIANS.		iv. 6	177
x. 34, 35	28	i. 16	53, 165	iv. 7	151
x. 35	166	ii. 15	165	iv. 8	152
xii. 13	35	I. and II. THESSALONIANS.		v. 5	82
xvii. 3	397	I. TIMOTHY, ...	120	v. 8	178
xix. 27	148	i. 15	111	vii. 2	62
xx. 3	142	ii. 4	111	vii. 9	147
xxi. 23	149	ii. 9	86	vii. 13, 14	178
xxi. 25	109, 134	II. TIMOTHY, ...	120	vii. 16	137, 187
ACTS.		iii. 5	109	x. 10	102
viii. 27	112	TITUS.		xiv. 6	401
ix. 5	190	i. 2	168	xix. 9	137
ix. 17	149	iii. 4	111	xx. 6	119
ROMANS.		HEBREWS.		xxi., xxii.	151
vi. 20	182	i. 2	53	xxi. 4	187
vii. 18	160	v. 12	134	xxi. 19-21	109
viii. 21	182	v. 14	25	xxi. 23	111
viii. 38	165			xxii. 2	152
ix. 13-16	188				

JW





OCT 20 1959

